THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

ACCORDING TO THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

BY

FATHER CLARE, S.J.

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

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PREFACE.

THE Book of the Spiritual Exercises contains the principles on which St. Ignatius, under God, formed his Society, and embodies its very essence and spirit. It is for this reason that all who are called by God to become members of that Society, and who wish to correspond to their high vocation, must always regard it as a sacred duty to apply themselves seriously to a study of the meaning and bearing of each word of a work which in such a short and concise form comprises the whole spirit of the Institute of the Society of Jesus, and to form themselves both interiorly and exteriorly in accordance with its teaching.

To enable them to do this effectually as by God's grace is possible, every member of the Society on his entrance has to spend one month in performing the Exercises, and during the two years of retirement in the Novitiate has to make them the constant subject of his study. In addition to this, there is a third year of probation devoted to the same holy occupation, and to a repetition of the month's retreat after each one has completed his full course of studies. Moreover, for the better understanding of the Exercises, and to prevent as far as possible all erroneous application and interpretation of them, it is deemed necessary that during these three years all should be under the guidance of an experienced

director or instructor, whose duty it is to explain and develop those truths and their practical conclusions which are so briefly and concisely set down by St. Ignatius.

Just as the Sacred Scriptures, if they are to be of practical utility, and are to exercise an influence on our minds and hearts, require that their meaning be explained to us by legitimate and God-guided interpreters, so too must this work of our holy Founder, which with some reason is said to have been dictated in its essential parts by the Mother of our Lord, be interpreted by competent authority, if it is not simply to be *read*, but to be applied to our daily life, and to mould and regulate our whole interior and exterior views and conduct. It is for this reason, and to supply as far as possible for the absence and want of such a director and instructor, that I publish the following pages, which are meant principally, though not exclusively, for those persons who, whether in the world, or in the ecclesiastical state, or consecrated to God in Religion, are accustomed to make an annual retreat, and are aiming at the perfection of their state of life.

I do it also the more readily, as we frequently hear great regret expressed that the Exercises are published in a language which is not understood by many, and also that they are compressed into such a small space that they are a sealed book except to those who are initiated.

Emboldened, then, by the example of the Very Reverend Father Roothaan of holy memory, of Father Ciccolini in Rome, Father Neumayr and Meschler in Germany, of Father Figuera in Spain, &c., I have humbly tried to follow in their footsteps, hoping that it may be for the greater glory of God and for the salvation and perfection of souls.

I have also added three Appendixes, which contain subjects for election or for reformation of life, the consideration of which may be of great practical benefit for persons living in the world, for priests, and for Religious.

If there be anything in these pages which is in any way at variance with the letter or spirit of the Spiritual Exercises, or which is not in full accord with the teachings of Holy Church, I hereby express regret and cordially reject it.

J. C.

St. Beuno's College,
Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1896.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In issuing a second edition of *The Science of Spiritual Life*, the author has availed himself of the kind suggestions which have reached him from various sources, and which have been made by persons whose judgment merits all respect. Therefore, where important instructions have been expressed with too great conciseness and brevity, and were thereby open to misapprehension, they have been more fully explained; the contemplations on the life of our Blessed Lord, the points only of which have been laid down by our holy Father in his Book of the Spiritual Exercises, have been developed for the benefit of those who are less advanced in the contemplative method of prayer; several contemplations on the Sacred Passion have been added for the convenience of such as may have the inclination and opportunity to devote themselves to study more deeply in the record of the sufferings and death of Jesus, what was the excess of His love for each of us, what was the price that He paid for our redemption, what is the fearful malice of sin which demanded such an awful atonement, and what is the value of an immortal soul; they will also be profitable by impressing upon us the great lesson of the necessity of self-sacrifice, if we mean to be true followers of Christ. Moreover, some new Meditations and Considerations on subjects of practical importance bearing on our daily life have also been introduced.

Lastly, there is also added a fourth Appendix, for the benefit of such as desire to make a retreat of eight or four days, and who cannot avail themselves of the wise counsels of an experienced director. For the convenience of such persons, several Orders of the Exercises are drawn up, from which they can select the one which they may deem best adapted to their state, circumstances, and requirements.

In conclusion, the author would humbly beg of those who may derive from the study of these pages some increase in their knowledge and love of our Blessed Lord, that they would say a prayer for him, that "whilst preaching to others, he himself may not become a castaway."[1]

J. C.

St. Beuno's College,
Feast of St. Ignatius, 1898.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

A THIRD edition of the late Father James Clare's book on *The Science of Spiritual Life*, being now called for, and the author having left behind him suggestions for parts being cast in a somewhat different form, besides introducing certain corrections and additions, it has been thought well to pass the whole volume through a careful revision, without, at the same time, changing or interfering with the author's treatment of his subject.

Manresa, Roehampton,
Feast of St. Ignatius, 1904.

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

THE PRAYERS OF ST. IGNATIUS.

ANIMA CHRISTI.

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, be my salvation.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, cleanse me.
Passion of Christ, be my strength.
O good Jesus, graciously hear me.
In Thy sacred Wounds hide me,
Nor let me be ever separated from Thee.
From the wicked enemy defend me.
In my dying hour do Thou call me,
And bid me come to Thee,
That together with Thy Saints I may praise Thee,
For ever and ever. Amen.

SUME ET SUSCIPE.

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty; accept my memory, my understanding, and all my will, whatever I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me; to Thee, O Lord, I give it back again. All is Thine; dispose of it according to all Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, and this is enough for me. Amen.

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The Science of Spiritual Life.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

1. THE Book of the Exercises may fitly be described as a practical course of the whole spiritual life. It lays down its END, and prescribes the MEANS by which that end is to be attained.

2. What the *end* of spiritual life is we find explained in the first of the twenty Annotations which are placed at the very beginning of the Book of the Exercises. It consists in rooting out all inordinate affections, for these cannot be in true accordance with the principles of faith and the dictates of right reason; and when these have been eradicated, in seeking and discovering the Divine will according to which we are to order and regulate our lives.

This is the end which we are ever to keep before our eyes.

3. The *means* by the employment of which we may safely trust to secure the end, are either general or special.

(*a*) The *general* means are prayer and self-conquest.

(*b*) The *special* means are found in the method and rules of election and of reformation of life; in the rules for the discernment of spirits for the use of those who are more advanced; in the rules on scruples; and lastly, in the rules for regulating ourselves and our judgments according to the teaching and spirit of the Holy Catholic Church.

4. The first of the general means, as we have said, is Prayer. The end of prayer, as explained in the first

Annotation and in the very title of the Exercises, is to arouse devotion and piety, whereby a man will overcome himself, and set his life in order.

5. This prayer is divided into *vocal* prayer, of which the method is given to us in the third of the "three methods of prayer;" and *mental* prayer, such as meditation, contemplation, and the first and second of the "three methods of prayer," which are placed at the end of the Book of Spiritual Exercises.

6. The means which are to be employed, and the price as it were which we have to pay, if we would succeed in prayer, are contained in the "ten Additions" and in the twelfth and thirteenth Annotations.

7. The next general means for the attainment of spiritual life is, as we noted above, *victory* over self, which we may call the *proximate* end of spiritual life.

It is this self-conquest which enables us to regulate and rightly dispose our lives, not by destroying or changing our nature, but by purifying, strengthening, and perfecting it; not by extirpating the passions of the human soul, but by directing and elevating them.

8. In the tenth of the Additions are given to us, admirably but briefly,

(*a*) The different methods to be employed in the practice of this self-conquest, and the distinction is also laid down between internal and external penance, together with the different ways in which external penance may be practised.

(*b*) Various motives also are proposed for the exercise of self-conquest, and further motives are put before us in the meditations during the course of the Exercises. Among these are the imitation of our Lord in His Private and Public Life, which we contemplate during the second week of the retreat; or, in the third week, the motives of sympathy and gratitude in return for all that He underwent during the three days in which He suffered and died for our redemption.

(*c*) The *principle* which is to guide us in our practices of self-conquest is denoted mainly in the contemplation

of the "Kingdom of Christ," and in the thirteenth Annotation, and also in the rules regarding temperance at our meals.

St. Francis Xavier came forth from the Spiritual Exercises so deeply impressed with the conviction of the necessity of this self-conquest, that during the whole of his after-life he was constantly repeating to himself the motto, *Vince teipsum;* and when asked why he did so, he answered, "I have not learnt any other lesson from our holy Father Ignatius."

By way of *Summarizing* the Exercises, and showing briefly the relation between the different parts, we may observe:

First, that they are divided into four parts, or, as they are called, weeks.

In the First Week we learn to serve God, and earnestly to desire to reform and regulate our lives. To this we are led by the meditation on the End of Man. By meditations on Sin we are excited to shame, confusion, sorrow, and fear for our past sins, and to repentance for them; and by the considerations on Death, Judgment, and Hell, we are induced to greater care to avoid them for the future.

The result which we draw from these is the conviction that the only true happiness of man is to be found in the service of God during this life, by which we shall secure also eternal possession of Him hereafter.

In the Second Week we learn that this service of God our Lord consists in the imitation of Christ, who assumed our nature, in order to re-establish His Father's Kingdom. We are induced to follow Him in the "Kingdom of Christ," and to aspire to sanctity by the imitation of His solid virtues as presented in the Incarnation, Nativity, Flight into Egypt, Life at Nazareth, &c. By these contemplations we are led to a generous resolve to despise all those things which tend to withdraw us from our last end, and to an heroic determination to embrace, not what is gratifying to the natural man, but

what is more in conformity with the doctrine and example of our Lord, and to choose hardships and injuries rather than pleasure and honour,[1] and that without any reserve.[2]

In the Third Week, after making our election, we confirm ourselves in it, and in a resolution to imitate more perfectly Christ our Lord in the practice of heroic virtue as manifested in the several mysteries of His Sacred Passion and Death, compassionating and sympathizing with Him in His feelings, affections, and generous dispositions.

In the Fourth Week we learn to serve God in a spirit of love and gladness, according to the words of St. Paul:[3] "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." The conclusion will be that the only happiness of man is to imitate Christ here, in the assured hope of rising with Him later, of possessing Him eternally hereafter, and of enjoying the happiness of loving our God, who is infinitely good in Himself, and infinitely good to us.

It is thus that we are stimulated to carry out our holy resolutions, and to persevere in them until death.

ON THE METHOD OF MEDITATION.

One of the chief advantages which is reaped from making the Spiritual Exercises is that we learn thereby the method of mental prayer, and how to make it. It is true that St. Ignatius nowhere gives a formal instruction on the subject, but in the Annotations at the beginning of the Book of Spiritual Exercises, and in the Additions at the end of the meditations for the First Week, which

[1] See Meditation on the Two Standards.

[2] See Meditation on the Three Classes, and Three Degrees of Humility.

[3] Ep. Coloss. iii. 1.

are supposed to be explained and supplemented by the person who gives the Exercises and is called the director, the Saint provides ample instruction to enable the exercitant to make meditation; supposing always that he is in earnest and in good dispositions to correspond with the grace of God, and with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, neither of which will be wanting to him.[1]

It was by a most singular providence of God that St. Ignatius was chosen to furnish us with a method of prayer so practical and safe, and so consonant with our nature; which is free from the danger of illusions, and which has been sanctioned by the approval of the Church and her Pontiffs, and adopted by so many of her Saints;[2] and of which Suarez[3] writes: "Hanc methodum et modum orandi tanquam præclarum donum a Deo datum et medium efficacissimum ad finem suum consequendum æstimare debet Societas." And again:[4] "In quo nihil deest quod desiderari possit."

With regard then to the practice of mental prayer, or meditation properly so called, we may divide the subject into four heads: the first, being the preparation for prayer; the second, the preludes; the third, the exercise of the three powers or faculties of the soul; and the fourth, an act of reflection.

1. The *preparation* for meditation is either remote, or immediate.

(*a*) The former of these is indicated in the first and second Additions. In the evening we must review well and prepare the points of the subject-matter upon which we propose to meditate on the following morning, and determine the special fruit which we desire to draw from it. On retiring to rest we must briefly recall these to mind, and after making some short and suitable prayer, we must endeavour to fall asleep. How much this practice helps to give us a clear idea of what we are

[1] Suarez, *De Rel.* l. ix. c. 6. [2] *Direct. Præm.* § 3.
[3] *De Rel.* l. ix. c. 6, § 3. [4] *Ibid.* § 7.

going to meditate upon is inconceivable, and also how greatly it enhances the importance of this the first duty of the day.

On awaking, and whilst washing and dressing, we must revert to the same subject, and occupy our minds with the thought of it, or with some befitting prayer.

If, for example, we are engaged in the meditations answering to the First Week, the Purgative Way, we may picture ourselves as rebel soldiers covered with shame and confusion, about to be brought into the presence of our King, or as criminals laden with chains and dragged before our Judge, or as lepers eaten up with loathsome ulcers; any of which may conduce to excite and promote affections conformable to the subject of our meditation. Or again, we might employ the time in reciting the *Miserere*, or some other of the Penitential Psalms.

Similarly, if we are employed in contemplations which concern the mysteries of our Lord's Life, and are proper to the Illuminative Way, we should picture to ourselves the place and circumstances of the special mystery, or the persons engaged in it, with their thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and the rest, or may employ ourselves in suitable vocal prayers, or in reciting some Psalm. By this means the mind is kept recollected, occasions of distractions are prevented, and the soul remains well disposed for prayer.

(*b*) With regard to the immediate or proximate preparation, we should during the space of a few minutes make a firm resolution to devote ourselves earnestly to our duty, and give no room to any other thought, solicitude, or affection. This is most important; for if we go to prayer with a firm resolution and a determined will to apply ourselves seriously, we shall generally find that it will succeed happily. We must also humble ourselves in the presence of God, protesting our vileness and unworthiness to enter into converse with His adorable Majesty.

But care must be taken that this humility does not in any way diminish our filial confidence in Him who

is our loving and Heavenly Father, who is always more willing to converse with us than we are to entertain ourselves with Him, and whose "delight is to be with the children of men."

We should briefly reflect also on the lights and graces we may derive from this meditation if it be well performed; for it has not unfrequently happened that one meditation faithfully and carefully made has been the first step towards eternal salvation and perfection, as was the meditation on death in the case of St. Francis Borgia, and on the value of the soul in that of St. Francis Xavier.

Lastly, we must unite our prayer with that of Jesus Christ, entreating Him through His infinite merits to grant that all our faculties, thoughts, and affections may tend only to the glory and honour of our God.

2. We then in a spirit of faith in God's presence kneel down, and in humble adoration make our preparatory prayer that all our intentions, actions, and endeavours may be devoted purely to the greater glory of God and to our soul's salvation, and say the prayer: "Prevent, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our actions," &c., adding, according to our devotion, the "Hail Mary" and a prayer to St. Joseph, to beg their assistance.

After this commencement and preparatory prayer comes the first prelude, or composition of place, as is clearly set down in the first Exercise and in the *Directorium*, chap. xiv. This consists in forming some material image or similitude by means of our imagination, when the subject of meditation is immaterial and incorporeal. In doing this care must be taken to avoid too great an effort or overstraining of the brain; nor should too much time be spent on it, or on any minute realistic details; but only so much as will be sufficient to settle and fix the mind, and help to recall it to the subject or mystery on which we are about to meditate. St. Ignatius gives us an example of this in the first Exercise on the "Three Sins."

In the second prelude, which must never be omitted, we beg of God the grace which we desire, and really

wish to obtain, as St. Ignatius so often repeats,[1] *petere id quod volo*—namely, the proper and special fruit to be obtained from the meditation, thus: "My dear Lord, without you I can do nothing. Vouchsafe, then, to help me to bring home to myself this truth or this mystery which I am about to meditate, and to draw from it the proper fruit for the sanctification and salvation of my soul."

Having spent some five or six minutes over the preludes, we begin the meditation properly so called, namely, the exercise of the three powers of the soul,—the memory, understanding, and will. We first employ our memory in calling to mind the subject of meditation. The intellect is next exercised in calmly discussing and reasoning upon it, in penetrating into its meaning, considering its reasonableness, realizing its importance and deducing practical consequences. After thus clearly and distinctly weighing the matter, and its application to ourselves, rejecting every pretext by which self-love might try to evade the conclusions necessary for the correction of our conduct, we next proceed to the exercise of the third faculty, which is the will.

As regards the employment of the understanding, two things must be observed: first, care must be taken not to tire or weary the head by too intense application, but to proceed gently and calmly, otherwise it will cease to function, and thus meditation will be hindered and consequently will fail to produce fruit. Secondly, although we are to apply our intellect seriously, so as to acquire clear and deep convictions, yet we must rather employ the *will* in exciting devout affections and forming suitable practical resolutions; and consequently should devote more time to its exercise than that of the understanding in striving after subtle or brilliant thoughts and ideas.

[1] What we should desire, and consequently should always earnestly ask for, is that God would grant us light to see His holy truth, and strength of will to embrace it and its practical consequences; for of what avail would be the illumination of the understanding, if the will were not moved by the grace of God to correspond?

Finally, the will is to be employed in eliciting acts of love of what is good and aversion against what is evil or less good, as presented to it by the understanding; and of hope or fear, of desire or confusion, forming in this way good resolutions to change or regulate one's life more perfectly. These resolutions should be made from the heart and be frequently renewed.

Such acts of the will are not to be enforced by violent action, but by a sincere and calm movement of the affections of the soul, which depend specially upon God, and are a gift of His grace, although they require our co-operation. Wherefore the soul must, by humility and purity of heart, dispose itself to receive this grace, rather than rely on its own efforts and industry to obtain it.

Again, we must remember that in the exercise of our will the soul is treating more directly and immediately with God, than in the employment of the understanding, and therefore we should feel greater reverence, and manifest this externally by assuming an especially humble and reverential position. Lastly, our resolutions must above all be practical; and we must not grow tired of frequently repeating them, because repetition impresses them more deeply on the mind and greatly strengthens the firmness of our purpose.

With regard to this, the essential part of meditation, St. Ignatius gives us certain documents, or cautions, in the course of the Exercises. Thus in the second Annotation, he tells us that we must avoid too much speculation, and subtle and studied discussions of the intellect, which do not tend to inflame the will with love and desire of what we propose to acquire in our prayer; otherwise our application would degenerate into a study instead of being a prayer.

For this same reason he warns us in the fourth Addition, not to be anxious to run hastily over all the points which we have prepared for consideration, but rather to dwell on any particular point as long as we find in it spiritual comfort, devotion, or matter profitable

for our advancement in virtue and for the conquest of self, even though the whole hour of meditation be spent therein.

With respect to the colloquy, St. Ignatius, at the end of the first meditation, says that "it should be addressed as by a friend to a friend, or by a servant to his master, or by a criminal to his judge; now humbly requesting some favour, now acknowledging our faults; at one time begging counsel or returning thanks, at another asking for some special virtue which we desire; or expressing our feelings with regard to the subject-matter of the meditation, and the rest."

The Saint prescribes these colloquies at the end of every Exercise;[1] but it is highly advantageous to make them during the course of the meditation whenever we feel moved to do so. There are various reasons why we should always finish with one or more colloquies. Thus, after communing in God's presence for so long, it is fitting that we should not leave Him abruptly, but with all reverence and respect; moreover, at the close of our meditation, the soul is more inflamed and penetrated by grace, and consequently is in better dispositions for earnest prayer to God, and offers up its different acts with greater fervour and devotion.

It is well also to remark that there is more need of reverence in making the colloquies, as is observed in the third Annotation, than in discoursing with the intellect; for, if great respect is to be shown even where we are only speaking about a king, how much more are we bound to show this when actually discoursing with him personally.[2] Another admonition of considerable importance is that we should give to prayer with the utmost exactness the full time prescribed, and this all the more when we find it irksome, dry, and void of all spiritual consolation. At such times the devil never fails to urge us by countless pretexts to shorten and curtail our prayer, and therefore St. Ignatius, in the twelfth and thirteenth Annotations, counsels us rather to prolong our prayer

[1] *Direct.* xv. § 5. [2] *Direct.* xv. §§ 6 and 7; and Suarez, *De Rel.* l. ix. c. v. § 5.

on such occasions, and thus not only resist, but also conquer the enemy of our human nature. Such fidelity and constancy in defiance of aridity, heaviness, and desolation of spirit, is one of the principal aids to our becoming real men of prayer.

Finally, the time of prayer being finished, St. Ignatius counsels us to spend a quarter of an hour in reflecting upon and making a diligent and accurate examination of our meditation, which may be done while either sitting, standing, or walking about. The object of this reflection is to find out whether our meditation has been well or ill performed. If the former, we should return thanks to God and resolve to continue in the same course; but if our meditation has not been successful, we must investigate the reason, making afterwards an act of sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment for the future.

Such is the manner which the Saint prescribes for meditation.

ON THE METHOD OF CONTEMPLATION.

In those parts of the Exercises which follow after the First Week we find that the form of meditation is changed, and is more aptly styled contemplation; inasmuch as we place ourselves in the presence of the mystery which is to occupy us, and consider the persons therein concerned, trying to realize their words and actions, their desires and views, together with all the attendant circumstances, and drawing from these the lessons which they are calculated to teach, and which the Holy Ghost may be pleased to inspire.

The remote preparation consists in determining the several points of the mystery which we propose to contemplate, and in each point the persons and their thoughts, words, or actions, if any. On retiring to rest we briefly recall to mind the points of the mystery, together with the fruit which we wish to draw from it; and on awaking

and rising next morning, we quietly occupy our mind on some general thoughts concerning it.

The immediate preparation differs in nothing from that of meditation, consisting in short acts of faith in the presence of God, of profound humility, of gratitude for being allowed the favour of communing with His Divine Majesty, &c.

Then, after an act of adoration and preparatory prayer, St. Ignatius prescribes, as the first prelude, a cursory view of the whole mystery which we are to contemplate, without entering especially upon any particular point.[1] As when a fine landscape is presented to our view, we take in confusedly the whole at one glance, but afterwards carefully study it part by part, and thus come to appreciate fully all its beauties and excellencies. In the second prelude we are to picture in our imagination the place, the persons, and circumstances of the mystery, without however entering into too minute details, which might occupy time, and would be unprofitable to our soul's progress. In the third prelude we are to beg that we may have a clearer knowledge of our Blessed Lord as He displays Himself and His perfections in the mystery, that so we may come to love Him more ardently and tenderly, and may imitate Him more closely in the exercise of the virtues He therein displays.

In the act of contemplation[2] we consider the outward bearing, the inward disposition, the thoughts and views of our Lord or our Lady, or of any others who figure in the scene; also their actions and the intention and manner in which they perform them. From each of

[1] *Direct.* xix. § 4.

[2] In considering the *persons*, we picture to ourselves their exterior comportment, their interior virtues theological and moral in the just, and the opposite vices in the wicked; the situation and circumstances in which they are placed, &c. As to the *words*, we consider the time and manner in which they are uttered, the matter of them, and also the internal feelings and affections which prompted them. As regards the *actions*, we may observe their causes, whether final or proximate, partial or total. Also the intention, manner, time, place, &c., of them.

which we draw fruit; either *comparing* our ways, views, dispositions, and intentions with those before us, or *resolving* to conform ourselves more perfectly with our great exemplar, or *determining* the occasions on which we will reduce our resolutions to practice. In all this we must act as really present and taking our part in the mystery, allowing also our hearts to communicate freely with the persons whose example we are studying. Naturally our colloquies will be much more frequent in this method of prayer than in meditation, for it is difficult to remain in the presence of others as silent observers without addressing them.

It may be useful for those who are as yet unused to meditation, to place the adjoined method of meditation before them whilst performing that exercise.

METHOD OF MEDITATION.

REMOTE PREPARATION.—Banish pride, sensuality, dissipation, and exercise the contrary virtues, humility, mortification, and recollection.

IMMEDIATE PREPARATION.—Read over the meditation the day before. Upon first awaking think of the meditation to be made. Excite appropriate sentiments. Enter upon it with a tranquil mind.

Commencement.

Standing, reflect that God is present.
Kneeling, adore. Preparatory prayer.

PRELUDES—
Brief review of the subject.
Construction of place.
Petition for special grace to understand and resolve.

The Meditation.

THE MEMORY—
Recall to mind the matter of the meditation.

THE UNDERSTANDING—
1. What is to be considered?
2. What practical conclusion to be drawn?
3. What are the motives? Is it becoming, useful, agreeable, easy, necessary?
4. How has this been observed hitherto?

5. What is to be done in future?
6. What obstacle is to be removed?
7. What means to be taken?

THE WILL—

1. Throughout the meditation excite affections more with the heart than the lips.
2. At the end of each practical consideration form resolutions:—Practical—Particular—Suited to present circumstances. Based upon solid motives—Humble—With fervent supplication for assistance.

Conclusion.

RECAPITULATION,

In which the resolutions made are confirmed.

EJACULATION,

Taken from the Holy Scriptures or the Fathers, recalling to mind the matter of the meditation, and the resolutions formed.

COLLOQUY,

Addressed to Jesus Christ, B.V.M., or to any Saint.

Reflection.

EXAMEN,

Of the manner in which the meditation has been made.

RECAPITULATION,

Of the whole meditation.

Of the practical conclusions—motives—affections—resolutions—particular inspirations.

ON THE NATURE AND DIVISION OF THE EXERCISES.

1. The Spiritual Exercises are not merely a collection of meditations in which a man reflects upon himself and upon his duties, and devoutly converses with God. Many masters of spirit had already compiled such books, as St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, and St. Lawrence Justinian; nor are they only a guide for the time of retreat, but they are also a complete, concise, and practical course of spiritual life, whereby every one may securely attain his ultimate end. They lead man by a right use of creatures, and by the imitation of Jesus Christ, to a perfect union with God, and to a holy conformity with His Divine will. For the Jesuit they are a book of doctrine, and a directory of the asceticism of the Society.[1] They are also well called by a holy man of the Bernardine Order, "libellum toti generi humano institutum."[2] And Paul III., in a Brief dated 1548, declares "dicta exercitia pietate ac sanctitate plena et ad spiritualem profectum fidelium valde utilia et salubria esse," and moreover he exhorts all the faithful to make use of them.

2. They are divided into three parts. The first of which contains the Annotations, the second the Meditations, and the third comprises the Precepts, Rules, and "industriæ"[3] of spiritual life.

3. The first process in the spiritual life is to reclaim the sinner from his evil life by inspiring him with a spirit of penance and real sorrow for his sins; and by rooting out of his soul every inordinate affection and every attachment which is not in accordance with the teaching of

[1] Suarez, *De Rel.* l. ix. cc. v. vi.

[2] *Hist. Soc.* xvi. § 127.

[3] By "industriæ" are meant certain instructions and directions which conduce to the better guidance of souls in spiritual things.

faith and the dictates of right reason. This is called the *Purgative* way.

The next is to place the exercitant on the true road, namely, Christ our Lord, by presenting Him as the model which every man is bound to study and to know,[1] and to copy in his own life, in mind, heart, and behaviour;[2] whether this follows the ordinary course or is beset with extraordinary difficulties and trials, such as our Lord underwent in His Sacred Passion and in His Death. This is called the *Illuminative* way.

Lastly, when the soul has proceeded thus far, it is led into close union with our Lord in mind, and heart, and will; and thus attains perfection here, and is prepared for everlasting union with Him in Heaven, according to the desire of His Sacred Heart.[3] This state is called the *Unitive* way.

It is needless to add that not all the precepts, rules, and "industriæ" of spiritual life, are adapted to each of these states, but some are applicable to one, and some to another.

[1] "Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." (St. John xvii. 3.)

[2] "For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son." (Romans viii. 29.)

[3] "That they may be one as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." (St. John xvii. 21.)

ORDER OF INSTRUCTIONS TO BE GIVEN DURING THE EXERCISES:

ON THE ANNOTATIONS, ADDITIONS, PRACTICES, AND RULES.

Annotations or rules for the guidance of Director and Exercitant. Some explain nature of Exercises (1—4); their different parts (18); how to derive most benefit from them (19, 20). Others refer to *Director*, explaining what he is to do (2, 6, 7, 8, 9); and what to avoid (10 to 17). The rest simply refer to the *Exercitant;* instructing him how he is to conduct self towards God (3, 5, 11), how be guided by his Director (12, 13, 16).

Additions or regulations in order to secure the fervour and earnestness of soul requisite for making the meditations well.

Practices: comprise, General and Particular Examen, Three Methods of Prayer, General Confession and Communion, Three Degrees of Humility.

Rules: On the Discernment of Spirits, on Election, on Distribution of Alms, on Scruples, on Temperance, on Orthodoxy.

These Instructions may be distributed through the days of the Retreat, in either of the two following orders.

1st Day. On the Annotations and Additions.

2nd Day. On General and Particular Examens. Confession and Communion.

3rd Day. On Discernment of Spirits (1st Week). 1st Method of Prayer.

4th Day. On Discernment of Spirits (2nd Week). 2nd and 3rd Methods of Prayer.

5th Day. On Three Degrees of Humility; on Election.

6th Day. On Temperance; on Distribution of Alms; on Rules of Orthodoxy.

7th Day. On 10th Addition; on Scruples.

Another order:

1st Day. The Annotations and Additions.

2nd Day. General and Particular Examen. Confession and Communion.

3rd Day. Discernment of Spirits (1st Week). 1st Method of Prayer. 1st Degree of Humility.

4th Day. Discernment of Spirits (2nd Week). 2nd Method of Prayer. 2nd Degree of Humility.

5th Day. On Election. Distribution of Alms.

6th Day. On Temperance. 3rd Degree of Humility. 3rd Method of Prayer.

7th Day. On Tenth Addition. On Scruples.

8th Day. On Rules of Orthodoxy.

THE ANNOTATIONS.

First among the "industriæ" laid down by St. Ignatius, and placed by him in the beginning of his Book of the Spiritual Exercises, are what he calls "Annotations."

The object of these is, as he states, "to give us some knowledge of the Exercises, and to be a help as well to him who gives as to him who makes them."

I. Under the name of Spiritual Exercises is understood every method of examination of conscience, of meditation, of contemplation, of vocal and mental prayer, and of other spiritual operations, as shall be afterwards declared: for as to go for a walk or a journey, and to run, are bodily exercises, so is the name of spiritual exercises applied to any method of preparing and disposing the soul to free itself from all inordinate affections, and after it has freed itself from them, to seek and find the will of God concerning the ordering of life for the salvation of one's soul.

In this first Annotation we find set down the character and the aim of the Exercises. Just as natural life has its own special acts, walking and running, and other bodily exercises, and again reading, study, and other mental exercises, so has the soul her various acts for acquiring the knowledge and love of God and the imitation of Jesus Christ, such as the examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, both vocal and mental prayer, besides other means of preparing and disposing the soul to divest itself of every inordinate affection. When this has been done, she seeks and finds out the Divine will regarding the regulating of life in order to secure eternal salvation.

Here, then, we see the two-fold aim we must have in view:

(*a*) To repress inordinate affections, which cannot lead us to our end, which expose us to the danger of losing it, and which neither faith nor right reason can approve.

(*β*) To learn God's will, that we may regulate our lives in accordance with it, and to do our duty to God in the fulfilment of His commandments, of the obligations of our state of life, &c. Such an aim as this is at once solid, practical, easy, safe, and not liable to delusion.

That the Exercises enable us to do all this is proved by universal experience, by their very fitness to prepare and dispose both the mind and heart, and lastly, by the extraordinary graces which are given to those who rightly perform them. Thus, then, we see that the Spiritual Exercises are designed to be practical, not speculative, that in making them we are not to seek for bright thoughts, brilliant illustrations, or sublime ideas. No! our object must be to penetrate deeply into our interior in order that we may know ourselves thoroughly, may discover our evil inclinations, and be determined to subdue them. It is thus only that we shall attain the end proposed. Without this, no matter what lights or sensible devotion and consolation we may attain, all will be labour in vain.

II. He who gives to another the method and order of a meditation or contemplation ought faithfully to narrate the history of the contemplation or meditation, going through the points however only briefly, and with a short explanation: because when the person who contemplates, takes the true groundwork of the history, discussing and reasoning by himself, and meeting with something that makes the history clearer and better felt (whether this happen through his own reasoning, or through the enlightenment of his understanding by Divine grace), he thereby enjoys greater spiritual relish

and fruit than if he who gives the Exercises had minutely explained and developed the meaning of the history; for it is not to know much, but it is to understand and savour the matter interiorly, that fills and satisfies the soul.

In the second Annotation the director is instructed to give the points of the meditations or contemplations *briefly*, and avoid any brilliant ideas or exaggerations of his own, but rather to fix the nail and let the exercitant himself drive it home, who will in this way take greater interest in it, will make the subject more practical and personal to himself, and will at the same time be more impressed by it. Nor should the exercitant go in search of many thoughts or fine and original ideas, but rather insist on a few which are really good and useful.

III. As in all the Spiritual Exercises that follow we make use of acts of the understanding when reasoning, and of acts of the will when exciting the affections, we are to take notice that in the acts of the will, when we are conversing vocally or mentally, with God our Lord or with His saints, greater reverence is required on our part, than when we make use of the understanding in reasoning.

In this third Annotation St. Ignatius repeats in what mental operations meditation consists; namely, in the earnest application of the intellect, in order to get a clear apprehension of the subject, and in the exercise of the will desirous to draw from it all the practical good we can. When we directly address ourselves to God or His saints in the course of our meditation, this must always be done with greater reverence than whilst we are communing with ourselves.[1]

IV. Although four weeks are assigned for the following Exercises, to correspond to the four parts into which these are divided; the first of which contains the consideration and contemplation of sins; the second, the Life of Christ our Lord up to Palm Sunday, inclusively; the third, the Passion of Christ our Lord; the fourth,

[1] "Non negatur semper in oratione reverentiam esse adhibendam, esto ejus cura non sit tam necessaria sicut quando in colloquiis et affectibus versamur." Suarez, *De Rel.* lib. ix. c. v. n. 7.

the Resurrection and the Ascension, to which are added three methods of prayer: still this is not to be so understood as if each week necessarily contained seven or eight days. For since in the first week some are slow in finding what they desire, namely, contrition, grief, and tears for their sins, and as some are more diligent than others, and more agitated and tried by divers spirits, it is necessary sometimes for the first week to be shortened, at other times lengthened, and so likewise in the case of the other following weeks, always seeking the fruit peculiar to the subject-matter. But, nevertheless, let the Exercises be concluded in thirty days more or less.

The fourth Annotation regards the length of time to be devoted to each of the four divisions of the Exercises. This must be determined by the character, dispositions, and circumstances of the exercitant, and on the greater or lesser fruit which he derives from them.

In the following sixteen Annotations, St. Ignatius details the helps and the obstacles to success, and the dispositions in which we are to begin and continue the Exercises.

V. It will much benefit him who is receiving the Exercises to enter upon them with a large heart and with liberality towards his Creator and Lord, offering all his desires and liberty to Him, in order that His Divine Majesty may make use of his person and of all he possesses according to His most holy will.

In this Annotation we are urged to have a courageous and generous heart towards God,[1] throwing ourselves absolutely into His arms; being determined to do without any reserve whatever He may desire; and leaving Him to lead us whithersoever He pleases, no matter how repugnant to our corrupt nature, and to mould us as He shall think fit.[2] It would be a great mistake to

[1] This disposition is absolutely necessary: for a retreat, if it is made properly, is a time of conflict between the powers of good and evil; and to gain the victory we must cast aside all niggardliness and selfish wavering or fear.

[2] "Quasi lutum figuli in manu ipsius plasmare illud et disponere, sic homo in manu Illius, qui se fecit, et reddet illi secundum judicium suum." (Ecclus. xxxiii. 13, 14.)

commence the retreat as simply a task to be got through; or to lay down certain limits to which we will go but no further in following the call of God. Moreover, we should determine what is the sacrifice which God requires of us, and resolve at all cost to make it. Observe how strongly in this *annotation* St. Ignatius urges upon us so necessary a disposition.

VI. When he who gives the Exercises finds that no spiritual motions, as consolations or desolations, are experienced in the soul of the exercitant, and that he is not agitated by divers spirits, he ought to question him fully about the Exercises, whether he makes them at the right times, and how; and also if he observes the Additions with diligence, taking account of him respecting each of these things.

When in the course of the Exercises we experience no emotion either good or bad, we should examine most carefully in what manner we are making them, for the absence of any such emotions is sometimes a sign that we are not making any real effort or are not truly in earnest; although indeed this calm may at times arise from physical causes over which we have no control. In such cases it is well for the director to inquire whether the Exercises are made at the proper times, whether they are performed seriously and earnestly, and whether the various Additions are punctually observed.

VII. If he who is giving the Exercises sees that he who is receiving them is in desolation and temptation, let him not be hard or severe, but gentle and kind, inspiring him with courage and strength for the future, laying open before him the wiles of the enemy of our human nature, and causing him to prepare and dispose himself for future consolation.

VIII. He who gives the Exercises, according to what he perceives to be the needs of the exercitant as regards desolations and the wiles of the enemy and likewise consolations, may explain the rules of the first and second week for discerning various spirits.

IX. It is to be noticed that when the exercitant is engaged in the Exercises of the first week, if he be a

person who has been little versed in spiritual matters, and if he be tempted grossly and openly, as, for example, if he betrays impediments to making further progress in the service of God our Lord, such as troubles, shame, and fear for his worldly honour, then let not the person who is giving the Exercises converse with him upon the rules of the second week for discerning various spirits, because in the proportion that those of the first week will benefit him, in the same will those of the second do him harm, because they contain matter too subtle and too high for him to understand.

X. When he who gives the Exercises feels that he who is receiving them is assaulted and tempted under the semblance of good, then it is fitting to converse with him upon the rules of the second week above mentioned; because generally, when the person is exercising himself in the illuminative way, which corresponds to the Exercises of the second week, the enemy of our human nature tempts him more then under the semblance of good, and not so much in the purgative way, which corresponds to the Exercises of the first week.

In these four Annotations is pointed out the duty of the director according to the various states in which the exercitant may find himself. From them we gather that in those who make the Spiritual Exercises a stout heart is needed to fight against weariness, heaviness, disquiet of spirit and the temptations of the devil; and in resisting them the director is instructed how to assist the exercitant. It may be that solitude and retirement produce irksomeness, or that dryness and desolation makes him regard prayer as loss of time, or that the devil perplexes the conscience. To overcome these temptations it is necessary to strengthen our confidence in God, and to guide ourselves by the rules for the Discernment of Spirits.

With regard to the tenth Annotation,[1] *vide* Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. nn. 8, 9.

[1] St. Ignatius observes that the enemy of mankind is wont to attack those who are engaged in the second process of the Spiritual Exercises or the Illuminative Way, rather than those in the Purgative Way. And this, if we take in the mind of the Saint, is true: for he adds, *Sub specie*

XI. It is of advantage to him who is receiving the Exercises of the first week, that he should know nothing of what he has to do in the second week, but that he so toil in the first in order to arrive at what he is seeking, as if he did not hope to obtain anything in the second.

Here St. Ignatius tells us that we are to fix our minds on the mysteries proper to that part of the Exercises on which we are engaged and on the fruit peculiar to it, and not to pass to any other. This is also prescribed in the sixth of the ten Additions. In the same manner we must not amuse or distract ourselves by reading or writing matter foreign to the subject in hand.[1]

XII. He who gives the Exercises must earnestly warn him who is receiving them, that as he has to occupy himself for an hour in each of the five Exercises or contemplations which will be made every day, so he ought to take care that his mind find peace in the thought that he has remained a full hour in the Exercise, and even a longer rather than a shorter time, because the enemy is wont often to manage that the hour of the said contemplation, meditation, or prayer be shortened.

XIII. It is likewise to be observed, that as in time of consolation it is easy and pleasant to remain the full hour in contemplation, so in time of desolation it is very difficult to complete it; wherefore the exercitant, in order to go against the desolation, and to overcome the temptations, must always remain a short time beyond the full hour, so as to accustom himself not only to resist the enemy, but even to overthrow him.

These two Annotations require us to employ faithfully in meditation the full time allotted to it; notwithstanding our repugnance, or

boni. The temptations of beginners are more palpable and undisguised, and thus are less dangerous. (Conf. Augustine, on Psalm 29.)

And again, Almighty God in His love and providence helps the beginner with special graces, with spiritual consolations, with facility in the performance of the Exercises, &c., whereas in regard of those who are more advanced He allows the enemy wider scope in order to advance the greater and more solid perfection of those who are tempted. (Conf. Gregory, *Moral*, xxiv. c. 7.)

[1] *Direct*. iii. §§ 2—5.

feeling of desolation. If indeed we make any change it should be rather to prolong[1] our meditation for a few minutes, that we may thus gain a complete victory over the devil.

XIV. He who gives the Exercises, if he sees that he who receives them goes through them with consolation and great fervour, must warn him not to make any promise or any rash and inconsiderate vow; and the more he may know him to be of a light disposition, the more must he warn and admonish him: because although one may rightly move another to enter Religion, by which is understood the making of the vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity; and although a good work done under vow is more meritorious than one done without one, nevertheless, the peculiar condition and the character of the exercitant must be greatly attended to, as also what help or hindrance he may find in the accomplishment of the thing he would like to promise.

In this Annotation we are cautioned against being carried away in time of consolation to make any vow or binding promise. It is the duty of the director to guard against such a danger.[2]

XV. He who gives the Exercises must not incline him who receives them more to poverty or to a vow, than to their contraries, nor to one state or manner of life, more than to another: for although outside the Exercises we may lawfully and meritoriously induce all who are in all probability fitted for it to choose a life of continency, of virginity, a life in Religion, or any kind of evangelical perfection, nevertheless, during the time of the Spiritual Exercises, when the soul is seeking the Divine will, it is better and more fitting that its Creator and Lord Himself communicate with the devout soul,

[1] To spend a whole hour in meditation is often difficult; more especially if in a state of aridity; hence we must not be surprised at experiencing feelings of weariness or disgust, and an inclination to shorten or interrupt the time.

This lesson we may apply to ourselves on other occasions also, when pressure of work, indisposition, or any other excuse, may suggest the retrenchment or omission of our ordinary exercise of prayer.

[2] *Direct.* v. §§ 2, 5, 6; vii. § 3.

inflaming it to love and praise Him, and disposing it for that way of life by which it will best serve Him for the future; so that he who gives the Exercises must himself not be influenced or inclined to one side or another, but keeping as it were in equilibrium like a balance, allow the Creator to act immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord.

The director must abstain during the Exercises from influencing the exercitant towards one state or method of life rather than another, but must leave the Creator to act directly and immediately with His creature.[1]

XVI. For the same purpose, namely, that the Creator and Lord may more surely work in His creature, if perchance such a soul is affected and inclined inordinately to anything, it will be very profitable for it to strive and employ all its forces to arrive at the contrary of that to which it is wrongly affected. Thus if it be desirous to seek and possess some office or benefice, not for the sake of the honour and glory of God our Lord, nor for the spiritual welfare of souls, but for its own advantage and temporal interests, it ought to force its affections towards the contrary, importuning in prayer and in other spiritual exercises, and seeking by supplication to obtain the contrary from God our Lord, namely, that it does not wish for the office or benefice, nor anything else, unless His Divine Majesty, bringing its desires into order, change its first affection in such way that the cause for desiring or having one thing or another be solely the service, honour, and glory of His Divine Majesty.

If the exercitant is assailed by any inordinate affection, or is unduly drawn after some less worthy object in any particular direction, is swayed by unworthy motives, or is in danger of employing dangerous means for the attainment of even a good

[1] This action belongs to the Creator and Lord of each one; it is He who gives the call, for He alone knows the circumstances in which He can manifest His will and dispose His creature to embrace that kind of life in which He wishes him to serve Him. No man should be so rash as to intrude himself between God and His creature.

object, he must by prayer, penances, and other methods, strive to direct his energies to the contrary side, and thus correct his evil inclination.[1]

XVII. It will be very profitable that he who gives the Exercises, without wishing to inquire into or to know the private thoughts and sins of him who receives them, should be faithfully informed of the various agitations and thoughts inspired into him by divers spirits; because, according to the greater or less progress made, he is able to give him some spiritual exercises suited to and conformable with the needs of a soul thus agitated.

In the seventeenth Annotation the director is told to keep in view the state of soul of the exercitant and adapt the subjects of meditation to the various changes which may take place in it.

XVIII. The Spiritual Exercises ought to be suited to the disposition of those who wish to make them, that is to say, according to their age, learning, or talent, lest to one untutored or of weak constitution be given things which he cannot bear without inconvenience, and by which he cannot profit. In like manner there ought to be given to each what is in accordance with that he wishes to dispose himself for, so that he may help himself more and profit thereby. And thus to him who desires only to be helped in order to get instruction and to arrive at a certain degree of contentment of soul, there ought to be given the particular and then the general examination, and likewise the method of prayer on the Commandments, on the deadly sins, &c., for half an hour in the morning, recommending him to confess his sins every eight days; and, if he can, to receive Communion every fifteen days, and better still, if so disposed, every eight days. This method of procedure is more appropriate for untutored and illiterate persons, explaining to them each Commandment, the deadly sins, the Commandments of the Church, the five senses, and the works of mercy. Likewise, if he who gives the Exercises perceives that the exercitant is of limited understanding and naturally

[1] *Direct.* ii. § 5.

of little capacity, so that from him much fruit is not expected, it will be more fitting to give him some of the easier Exercises, until he confess his sins, and then give him some examination of conscience, and a method of more frequent confession than was his custom, so that he may preserve what he has gained. It will also be better not to proceed further to the matter of election, nor to any other Exercises beyond the first week, especially when, as there is not time for all, he can derive profit in others.

The director is here bidden to consider the age, character, health, mind, and will of the exercitant, as well as the object he has in view, and then determine with what exercises he may best occupy him.

XIX. He who is taken up with public affairs and necessary business, if he be of considerable learning or ability, may take every day an hour and a half for the Exercises, having it explained to him for what man was created, and moreover, during the space of half an hour the particular examination may be given him, and then the general, and also the method of confession and of receiving Communion; and let him during three days every morning for an hour make a meditation on the first, the second, and the third sin, and then at the same time for another three days the meditation on personal sins, and for yet another three days on the punishment corresponding to sins, and in all these three meditations let the ten Additions be given him, keeping the same method with regard to the mysteries of the Life of Christ our Lord, as they are explained afterwards at length in the Exercises.

This Annotation continues the subject of the preceding one.

XX. To him who is less occupied, and who desires in every possible way to profit, let all the Spiritual Exercises be given in the order in which they follow: and in these generally he will derive all the more profit, in proportion as he separates himself from all friends and relations and

from all earthly cares, as for example, by leaving the house he dwells in and choosing another house or room, there to dwell in as great privacy as possible, in such a way that it be in his power to go daily to Mass and to Vespers, without fear that his relations will put any obstacle in his way. And, among many other advantages, three principal ones will result from this separation. The first is, when a person separates himself from numerous friends and acquaintances, and disengages himself from many ill-ordered concerns, in order to serve and praise God our Lord, he gains no little merit in the eyes of His Divine Majesty. The second is, that when a person has thus withdrawn himself, as his understanding is not divided on many subjects, but all his solicitude is placed on one thing only, namely, on the service of his Creator and the profit of his own soul, he enjoys a freer use of his natural powers in seeking diligently what he so much desires. The third is, that the more our soul finds itself alone and in solitude, the fitter it renders itself to approach its Creator and Lord; and the nearer it thus unites itself to Him, the more it disposes itself to receive graces and favours from His Divine and Supreme Goodness.

St. Ignatius here strongly recommends retirement and solitude,[1] interior and exterior recollection, and a strict guard of the senses. To fly from the ordinary scenes of daily life and employments, to observe strict silence, to preserve the soul in peace and freedom from solicitude is a sure means of finding God and learning His holy will.

The above Annotations are of great consequence, and we should keep them ever before us if we would derive benefit from the Exercises. We should esteem them highly, for they have been approved by Holy Church: while their importance and benefit has been confirmed by long experience. Their usefulness to us may thus be summarized:

[1] This solitude reason approves, for nothing is more opposed to the action of God's grace than the crowding upon the mind of either persons or things This is confirmed by experience, by the teaching of Scripture and by the practice of the Saints, whether Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Virgins, or Doctors. In solitude "prava corriguntur, parva nutriuntur, magna oblectantur ingenia," as St. Augustine says of the Scriptures

In the first, we learn the *nature* of the Exercises; in the second, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth, the *way* in which they are to be given; and in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth, we are informed *to what kind of persons* they should be given.

Sometimes these Annotations may supply the opening exercise of a retreat: comprising as,

Point 1.—The end of the Exercises.

Point 2.—The means of making them well.

Point 3.—The motives which should urge us to make them as well as we can.

ON THE EXAMINATIONS OF CONSCIENCE.

The examination of conscience is an essential exercise of spiritual life, for by means of it we discover and correct whatever is defective in our conduct. Its importance is seen by the place which it holds in the Spiritual Exercises, and by the manner in which St. Ignatius insists upon it.[1] It is also an effective means of practising penance, of purifying the soul from sin, and of subduing the passions and keeping them in subjection.[2]

St. Ignatius places this examination of conscience immediately after the "Principle or Foundation" and before the meditations on Sin, because in its use we become acquainted with our own sins and failings, and are induced to purge and cleanse our souls from them, and amend our lives,[3] which is our object in the first part of the Exercises.

He divides it into the Particular and General Examina-

[1] Conf. Annotations 18, 19.

[2] Conf. *Instit.* p. iii. c. 1, § 11; p. 4. c. 4, §§ 3, 4.

[3] This examination, says Suarez, is most useful for the purifying of the conscience, and also for frequent confession. (Suarez, lib. ix. c. vi. n. 5.) If, in the examination which we make twice a day, we refer our act of contrition and purpose of amendment to our next confession, it secures us against a danger in frequent confessions of making too light of what is an essential point in the Sacrament of Penance, namely, contrition. This practice is much recommended, and is observed with great spiritual profit by many pious souls.

tion, after the example of many saints and founders of Religious Orders, as St. Basil,[1] St. John Climacus,[2] and St. Bernard.[3] For the members of his Society he prescribes the use of these Examens twice at least each day, as a most efficacious means to obtain true purity of mind and heart, and hinder our falling into sin or becoming remiss in the service of God. Further, the importance attached to this rule by his followers is evidenced in the twenty-fifth decree of the Seventh General Congregation.

THE PARTICULAR EXAMEN.

As to the Particular Examen, it is true that many holy and enlightened men regularly practised it; but St. Ignatius was the first who reduced it into form,[4] and laid down rules which render it practical and really efficient.

Every one, however spiritual and devout, has some weak side, some predominant passion or special natural inclination, which is the source of all his failings, causes him to fall more frequently, or exposes him to greater danger. This explains how after many years we find a tendency in ourselves to the same infirmities and negligences.

It is in order to remedy this deplorable disorder that St. Ignatius formulated his method of the Particular Examen,[5] and it is by the regular use of it that so many members of his Society have attained the highest perfection, as we read in its history.

He assigns three times in the day for its exercise:

The first is, that as soon as we have risen and dressed,

[1] Serm. i. *De Instit. Monach.*

[2] *Scala Paradisi*, grad. iv. *De Obed.* [3] *De Vita solit.*

[4] St. Basil in his shorter rules, No. 289, observes, "Quando aliquis in aliquo frequentius peccat considerare debet radicem, et ibi specialiter medicinam adhibeat, et in *singulis peccatis simili modo*."

[5] Suarez, lib. ix. c. 6, n. 5.

we make a serious resolution not to give way to that fault or defect which is the subject of our Particular Examen.

The second is about the middle of the day, when we beg of God that which we *have at heart*, namely, grace to remember how often we have fallen into the particular fault, and to amend it for the future. Then we are to examine how often we have been guilty of it, reviewing each hour from rising to the time of examen, and to mark down in the table supplied beneath, the number of faults we have committed. After which we must resolve with God's help to amend during the interval between this and the next examen.

The third time is after supper before retiring to rest, when we must examine ourselves in the same manner, as regards the period since our last examen; and after again marking down in the second line of the subjoined table the number of our falls, we must renew our sorrow and our resolution for the time to come.

The Saint subjoins two observations, to render this practice more effectual. The first is that as soon as we feel we have yielded to the fault or inclination, we should immediately, in expression of our sorrow and repentance, place our hand upon our breast, without however attracting the observation of others. The second is that during the week we should compare line with line, day with day, and afterwards week with week, in order to find out what amendment or progress we have made.

[1] D
d
d
d
d
d
d

[1] It will be observed that the capital letter D stands for the Sunday, and the other letters for each day of the week in succession. These forms for our Particular Examen can be obtained from the Manresa Press, Roehampton, S.W.

There is no sin or fault, though ever so inveterate, which we cannot overcome by the punctual and constant use of this means. In regard of this matter two difficulties present themselves.

1. The first is as to the choice of the subject of our examination. This must be some sin, or some offence, or lastly, some deliberate negligence (*peccata, offensiones, et negligentiæ*), such as imprudence in speech, in looks, actions, omissions, and matters of purity; or again, want of intention, neglect of silence, uncharitableness, idleness, &c.

Sometimes the subject may be found in regard of our good qualities. If we are naturally of a sweet and gentle disposition, does this degenerate into weakness or timidity? If our character is naturally strong, does it make us hard, proud, obstinate, brusque, and domineering? And so of the rest.

Another way of finding matter for self-examination is by observing how our particular predilections affect us; what especially troubles us, or excites us, &c.

2. The second difficulty regards our perseverance in the subject of our particular examination and the diligence with which we make it. To remove this difficulty, it is well to form a fresh resolution upon it each time we go to confession. We may also change the subject from time to time, and thus revive our attention. Or again, we may vary it by making acts of the virtue opposed to our predominant fault or passion; more especially if we commit the fault rarely, or the occasions of committing it occur but seldom.

In such cases it may happen that owing to great care in our early training and education, or to other environments, we may have no clearly defined predominant passion or habitual defect. If so, we shall generally feel drawn towards some special virtue, such as mortification, recollection, poverty, prayer, or to some special form of devotion, &c., in which it is the will of God that we should acquire great perfection. In aid of this design, we should apply the Particular Examen in the same

manner as we do for our faults, and decide on a certain number of acts of that virtue for each morning and afternoon.

THE GENERAL EXAMEN.

This is a salutary means of purifying the soul, and is useful in disposing it for confession.

St. Ignatius before laying down the method of the General Examen, makes certain useful preliminary observations on its subject-matter, such as our thoughts, words, and actions.

1. As regards *thoughts* he observes that they may arise from ourselves and from our own free-will, or they may be suggested to us, either by the good angel, or by the devil. Against the latter we must ever be on our guard.

When an evil thought suggests itself, or is suggested from without and is at once rejected, it furnishes an occasion for an act of virtue, which God will reward. If, when rejected, it again returns, and is as often repelled, the merit becomes correspondingly greater, because each rejection is a distinct act of virtue.

As long as there is no consent, but only hesitation and a kind of half-deliberation or negligence, the thought will be more or less venial in proportion to the amount of negligence or deliberation.[1]

But if we give full consent to the evil thought, we are guilty of a mortal sin. If we put the thought into action, the guilt of the sin is augmented, and this for three reasons: because it dwells longer in the mind, involves fuller deliberation and intensity, and, at least in matters of the sixth commandment, often leads another into sin. In examining ourselves as to our thoughts, we must not expect or even try to get mathematical

[1] "B. Ignatius loquitur præcise de negligentia quæ non transit in consensum nec directum nec interpretativum. . . . Expendendum est illud verbum 'aliquantulum' et 'obiter,' quod idem significat ac subreptitiè et antecedenter ad plenam judicii et rationis animadversionem: quamdiu autem delectatio in eo statu durat, etiamsi aliqua negligentia interveniat, tantum est peccatum veniale." (Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. n. 13.)

exactness, but, as in all moral questions, must be satisfied with a moral certainty.

2. In regard to our *words*, the Saint lays down that to justify the taking of oaths it is requisite that they should be *truthful*, and at the same time *necessary*, affecting some matter of great moment as regards the soul, body, or temporal goods, and that they should be uttered with becoming reverence. This reverence is shown when in naming God a man reflects and acknowledges the honour due to Him.

By an idle word is to be understood any utterance which does not really benefit ourselves or others, and is not intended to do so. Whereas, if our conversation be rightly ordered, it becomes an occasion of merit; if wrongly ordered, it is sinful.

As regards detraction, when we reveal any grievous sin of another we sin mortally; when we mention some fault only or defect, our sin is venial, unless the act be justified by a right intention, or the fact we tell is public and notorious. Should we reveal the matter in order to protect others, to secure the correction of the offenders, or preserve others from falling into the same sin, then our good intention justifies us, provided prudence be properly observed.

3. With regard to *actions*, we must examine ourselves by help of the Ten Commandments, the Precepts of the Church, and the orders of lawful Superiors, care being taken to discriminate between their strict orders and their recommendations. Under these heads sin is greater or less according to the grievousness or lightness of the matter.[1]

[1] An objection is raised in this place against the doctrine of St. Ignatius, as if he taught that it was grievously sinful to take no heed of the "pious counsels and ordinations of Ecclesiastical Rulers." As Suarez says, if we spurn or out of contempt violate the rescripts and regulations of the Rulers of the Church, it is certainly a mortal sin. But if we are simply careless about these, as of Indulgences and exhortations to gain them and the like, though this betrays an unspiritual mind, yet in the absence of formal contempt, we do not incur the guilt of mortal sin, unless indeed we thereby cause scandal. (Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. nn. 14, 15.)

METHOD OF THE GENERAL EXAMEN.

The General Examen embraces five points.[1]

Point 1.—St. Ignatius wisely requires us to begin with giving thanks to God, thereby acknowledging the many mercies we are continually receiving from Him, and by confronting our base ingratitude and failings with His countless favours to us, we shall excite in our hearts greater sorrow and horror for them. Under this point we should thank Him for His favours to Jesus, to Mary, to all the Saints, to mankind at large, next to our family and friends, and lastly to ourselves, even this very day; dwelling on each in particular.

Point 2.—We are to beg the grace to know ourselves and see ourselves as God sees us, that we may judge ourselves accordingly.

Point 3.—We next examine ourselves as to our thoughts, words, or actions, from hour to hour since our last examen, as hinted above. We should also recall the omissions of duty which we have been guilty of, as well as the abuses of graces received.

Point 4.—Under the fourth point we are to strive to make an act of perfect contrition, and to incite ourselves by other motives to shame and confusion for the sins of our past lives, as well as for the offences and negligences of which we have been guilty since our last examination, including especially our Particular Examen, and faults against Charity, our rules, or our spiritual duties.

Point 5.—Lastly, we are to renew our resolution of earnestness and fidelity in the service of God for the future, and to take special care to avoid those sins, offences, and negligences by which since our last examen we have offended God. End with "Our Father."

It would be well on this subject to read the *Direct.* xiii. and Suarez, l. ix. c. 5, n. 13. It is much to be recommended that we should refer these our examens to our next

[1] Suarez, lib. ix. c. 6, n. 5.

confession, especially the fourth and fifth points, for thus we are always in readiness, in case of unforeseen accidents, to receive sacramental absolution, and are less liable to grow negligent and indifferent in our preparation for confession.

Father Roothaan has drawn out the following method of examination of conscience according to the above points laid down by St. Ignatius, which is much to be recommended.

1st PRELUDE.—*Reflect a moment on the presence of God.* 2nd PRELUDE.—*Kneel and say a short Prayer, e.g.*, "In Thee and for Thee," &c., *or*, "Prevent we beseech Thee," &c.

I.—ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

O my God, I adore Thee, I praise and bless Thee, and I give Thee earnest thanks for all Thy benefits; first and chiefly for those conferred on the Most Holy Humanity of Christ our Lord, and on His most loving Mother; as also for those bestowed upon the Saints in Heaven, especially upon those of our Order and my Patrons, and for all Thy favours so liberally conferred upon the whole human race.

In the next place, I return Thee thanks for all the benefits especially granted to myself, both as to body and soul; for my Creation, Preservation, and Justification, for the Sacraments I have received, my Vocation to the true Faith, as also for N. N. (recall chief ones).

Blessed for evermore be Thy Almighty Power, Thy tender Providence, and infinite Charity, which has proved itself so gentle, and loving, and liberal, towards me each day of my existence, and especially TO-DAY. In return for all these favours I offer to Thee, O my God, the praises of the Church Militant and Triumphant, also the merits of Jesus my Saviour, and all that Blood of infinite value, which He poured out of the *Wound of His Right Hand*, when hanging on the Cross.

II.—BEG FOR LIGHT.

O God of my heart, I beseech Thee, by the Most Holy Blood of Thy Son, which streamed from the *Wound of His Left Hand*, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to grant me abundant grace to *discover*, to *detest*, to *bewail*, and to *correct* my sins, especially N.; so that at the Day of Judgment, I may deserve to be placed by Thy holy angels, not on the left hand of my Judge, but on His right. O true Light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world, enlighten my mind.

III.—Examination.

O Lord, how far have I gone astray from the path of perfection, although my Jesus hath marked it out for me by footprints stained with blood! How often have I again fallen since my last examination!

Particular Examen.—Make a review of each hour. On rising, or after the mid-day examen, did I recall the subject of it, and resolve to guard against it? Did I, when I fell, put my hand to my heart, &c., in token of sorrow, &c.? Did I mark, compare day with day, week with week, month with month?

General Examen.—Rising, Morning Prayer, Meditation, Mass, Breakfast,—Special Duties of your State,—Purity of Intention,—Charity in Thought, Word, and Deed,—Special Spiritual Duties for each day, viz., Examination of Conscience,—Spiritual Reading,—the Rosary,—Prayers of the Confraternity, &c.

Ordinary Actions.—Exactness, Fervour, Perseverance.

Rules of Modesty.—In Dress, in Custody of the Senses, &c. Worldliness,—Idleness,—Harshness towards equals and inferiors,—Gossip, useless Reading.

How unworthy am I of all the favours which my God is ever heaping upon me, of the graces of this very day, and the society and friendship of so many favourites of God. How many *sins*, *negligences*, and *imperfections* have I again committed? How slowly have I run in the way of perfection! May the Most Sacred Blood which flowed from the *Wound of the Left Foot* of my Redeemer wash out the prints of my feet as I strayed away from Him, and from the path of virtue.

IV.—Act of Sorrow.

Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, so that with Magdalene at the feet of my Saviour I may bewail my ingratitude, my negligence, and all my sins, more particularly N. and N. To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee! I am heartily sorry that I have offended Thee, O my God, who art the *Sovereign* Good!

I am sorely afflicted that I have provoked Thee to anger, who art my *Creator*, my *Redeemer*, my *First Beginning*, my *Last End!* I am grieved that I have preferred to Thee a thing of no value, for the sake of which I have displeased Thee, and thus *have postponed Thee, my chiefest and eternal Good*, to the most vile creatures. I desire to love Thee above all things created, and would rather lose all things created than even once to displease Thee.

I detest all my sins above all the evils of this world, *because they offend Thee*, and Thou dost abominate them infinitely. Oh! that I

could grieve a thousand times more than I have offended Thee, O Infinite Goodness. I fling myself as a suppliant at the feet of Thy Son, and by the *Wound of His Right Foot* I implore of Thee to say to me as He once said to Magdalene, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Confiding in this hope, I fling myself entirely into the gaping Wounds of my Jesus, and into the ocean of Thy Mercy. By the merits of His Passion, I claim forgiveness from Thy bounty. Look upon me, and have mercy upon me!

V.—Purpose of Amendment.

O most loving Jesus! from this hour I will satisfy that fond desire of Thy Heart, which for me and my salvation was pierced on the Cross, and will correct my past sins and negligences, *more especially N.* Never will I again offend Thee, even in the smallest things, knowingly and willingly, my Sovereign Love. Confirm this my resolution by the merits of that Blood which came forth from the innermost depths of *Thy Most Blessed Heart*, and which, in union with Thy Life, Passion, and Death, I now offer in satisfaction for my sins.

My dear Jesus! I unite my poor heart with Thine, all wounded and torn. May *Thy Heart* be a hiding-place in which I may dwell securely. My heart is ready, O my God! my heart is ready to make atonement for my sins—to adopt the means of correcting them, and of acquiring all the perfection of my holy state.

O God! be merciful to me a sinner. *Pater*, *Ave*, &c.

N.B.—Dwell on those words which are in italics, especially in the 4th Point, on the several motives of contrition.

GENERAL CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

Amongst the documents for the first part of the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius adds one on General Confession and Communion, in which he observes that there are three advantages in making a general confession of devotion, during this part of the Exercises.

The first is: that although he who goes to confession every year is not bound to make a general confession; yet by so doing he may be advanced in perfection and obtain greater merit, because of the greater actual sorrow for all the sins and depravity of his past life, which he usually feels at the time of retreat.

The second is that, the exercitant whilst making these Exercises, apprehends more clearly his sins and their malice, and feeling in consequence a deeper sorrow for them, will derive very great merit and benefit from his confessions and contrition.

The third is that, he is thereby better disposed and prepared to receive Holy Communion, by which he will not only be protected from falling back into sin, but will preserve and increase the graces that he has received.

The confession,[1] therefore, may well be made at the end of this first part of the Exercises.

THE ADDITIONS.[2]

Another document which St. Ignatius places before us contains "Ten Additions," or directions for the better making of the Exercises, and the more sure attainment of that which we have at heart, namely, the rooting out of all inordinate affections and the knowledge of the will of God in our regard.

Much of the success of a retreat depends on the observance of these rules. They teach us what we have to do, both before and after meditation; and in this respect they apply not only to the time of retreat, but to our whole life. Although each one appears very easy and simple, we shall not persevere in the practice of all without the help of God's grace, and of a sincerely good-will along with continued personal effort. To be faithful in their observance for a long time is an heroic act.

[1] With regard to the general confession, it is always well to consult one's confessor or the director, as the exercitant cannot safely judge for himself. If one is about to enter upon a different state of life, or has been leading a tepid or negligent life, and feels that God by His grace prompts him to enter upon a new life of fervour, a general confession of one's whole life is generally to be recommended. In other cases or circumstances, it is to be rather recommended to make a general review from the last annual or general confession, at least of those offences which have been more serious, or more frequent, or have given disedification to others.

[2] *Direct.* xv. § 19.

Addition 1.—When about to sleep, we must think at what time we are to rise and for what purpose; briefly reviewing the next morning's meditation. The utility of this practice cannot be overestimated.

This concluding thought of the day acts like a coal put on the fire overnight, for in the morning we have only to stir it up to make it burn brightly at once.

Addition 2.—On rising we must turn our minds to the subject of our meditation, in order to bring them at once into relation with the truth upon which we are going to meditate, and to penetrate them more intimately with its meaning.

Thus for example in the first part of the Exercises, we ought to feel a deep sense of shame and confusion, such as a subject would feel who, having been convicted of a grievous crime against his Sovereign from whom he had received signal and extraordinary favours, was about to appear before him and all his Court, &c.

This feeling becomes us and should be ours everywhere and at all times. How precious would its fruits be! It would save us from innumerable faults and would urge us on to serve God faithfully. Truly it becomes us; for how many benefits have we not abused? Benefits which we rarely recall, and more rarely ponder over, such as Creation, Redemption, Vocation, Justification, although we are reminded of them in our examination of conscience twice every day. This feeling should be prevalent in our minds during the Holy Mass. Again in the second Exercise, we have to confess with deep sorrow that we are grievous sinners, deserving only of being led out as criminals for execution. This two-fold acknowledgment is the simple truth; for all have sinned greatly,[1] even those who have never lost their baptismal innocence. Such preservation is not their own work, but the work of God; and the fact of having committed one venial sin is sufficient to make them most truly sinners. If our good God had not prevented its consequences, where might they not be now?

[1] "In multis offendimus omnes." (St. James iii. 2.)

Addition 3.—Standing at a distance of one or two steps from the spot where we are to begin our meditation, we should reflect during the space of an "Our Father" that we are in the presence of God, and should make an act of humble reverence; thus preparing our souls for prayer so as not to offend God.[1] It would be a sign of indifference and irreverence towards His Divine Majesty were we to enter upon meditation without considering in what act we are about to be engaged, and before whom we are about to perform it.

Addition 4.—We are to take that position during our prayer, which will best help us to attain the end which we have at heart, and cause us least distraction, provided it be one of reverence and respect. Such position may be changed to one of standing, sitting, walking, if found needful. We should not pass on from one point to another, as long as one suffices to fill the mind.

Addition 5.—If possible, we should after finishing examine how we have passed the time of meditation. If it has been spent without fruit, we should investigate the cause and resolve to remedy it; if well, we must thank God, and determine to persevere in the same course.

Addition 6.—We ought to divert our minds from all thoughts which are not in keeping with the meditation before us, such for example as those of Paradise, the Resurrection, &c., when our object is to attain a sense of shame, sorrow, and compunction for our past sins; and this even though such thoughts may be attended with much spiritual consolation.

Addition 7.—We should for the same end, except when reciting the Divine Office or taking our meals, &c., darken any light in our rooms when occupied with the first part of the Exercises. St. Ignatius makes much of darkness as an incentive to compunction. Were this practice, however, to produce mental gloom or aridity of heart, as in the case of timid and nervous persons, the

[1] "Before prayer prepare thy soul; and be not as a man that tempteth God." (Ecclus. xviii. 23.)

principle of adapting the means to the end would justify this Addition being omitted.

Addition 8.—We must avoid all levity or laughter, or the mention of anything intended to provoke it.[1]

Addition 9.—We should also maintain great custody over our different senses, more especially of the eyes, thus cutting off as far as possible all distractions and obstacles to interior recollection.

Addition 10.—This Addition regards penance, and in a few words gives us, as we may say, the essence of a complete treatise on the subject. The Saint urges the practice of penance in the Additions, as it inculcates a virtue which purifies the soul, exercises a great influence on prayer and meditation, and is the price we pay for close union with God.

It would appear from the testimony of Blessed Peter Faber, that the first Fathers of our Society drew greater fruit from the Spiritual Exercises in proportion as they imitated the practice of St. Ignatius in this respect more closely.

1. The Saint first lays down the distinctive *character* of penance, as the virtue by which we destroy sin in our souls, and satisfy God for our offences. The internal effect of sin is to turn us away from God, the external is to turn us towards creatures. Therefore our penance must be *internal* by making acts of repentance and sorrow, along with frequent resolutions to avoid sin and the occasions of it for the future; it must be also *external*, by the infliction of pain, to punish the senses for the abuses of which they have been guilty. The latter is the fruit of the former, but they mutually promote each other, and should be practised by all.

2. St. Ignatius enjoins three *ways* in which we can practise external penance, and lays down a certain principle regarding it, by the application of which we shall avoid all extremes.

The first way in which we can exercise mortification

[1] "A fool lifteth up his voice in laughter: but a wise man will scarce laugh low to himself." (Ecclus. xxi. 23.)

is in regard to *food*, when for example we retrench from this what is suitable, and the greater retrenchment we make the greater and more meritorious is our penance, provided we do not thereby really injure our health nor weaken our constitution. We can practise mortification in the quantity and quality of our food, but if we do this only as respects what is superfluous, it is not penance but simply temperance.

The next exercise of penance regards either the amount of *sleep* we take, or the self-indulgence we grant ourselves in the manner of taking it. Here again we practise penance only when we deny ourselves real convenience. Let nothing however be retrenched from the length of sleep that we actually require.

The third manner of practising exterior penance is to *chastise and inflict pain* on our bodies, by wearing hair-shirts or chains, by using disciplines, and the like. In all such methods of penance our aim should be to make the pain sensibly felt, without incurring the danger of causing any notable injury; they should therefore be carried out with prudence and persevered in regularly and faithfully. This will be safely done by the use of disciplines made of whip-cord, which will cause pain and yet will not expose us to the danger of permanently injuring ourselves. And here again the same principle obtains. All these several ways of penance must be used prudently and with persevering regularity.

4. Lastly, our attention is drawn to the *motives* which should urge us to desire this spirit of penance. These are: first, that by exterior penances we may offer up satisfaction for our past sins; secondly, that we may thus overcome ourselves and our evil inclinations: and thirdly, that we may thereby draw down from Heaven some special grace we stand in need of, either for ourselves or others. Which of us has not a heavy debt to pay for our past sins, and for our present multiplied offences and negligences? How much there is yet to be done to reduce our rebellious nature to subjection! And in each hour we stand in need now of one grace, now of

another, and this not only for ourselves, but also for others who are under our charge or direction. It is to be observed that if after doing all that in him lies, the exercitant does not appear to attain what he desires, it is often of advantage to make some change in his food, or sleep, or in his other works of penance, by relaxing them for two or three days, or by increasing them; but always with great prudence.

During the time of retreat we should take as the subject of our Particular Examen, the manner in which we fulfil each duty, and observe the Additions.

RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS.

(*Suitable chiefly for the First Week.*)

1. In the preamble to his instruction on the General Examen St. Ignatius[1] explains to us that, besides those interior thoughts which spring simply from our own free will and desire, there are "two kinds of thought which come from without, one from the good, and one from the bad spirit." This teaching the Saint develops more fully

[1] St. Ignatius, in the course of the Exercises, makes use of certain expressions, such as, *divine illustrations* and *illuminations*, the *feeling* of *different spirits*, of *rays* of *internal knowledge*, *movements* of *heavenly consolation*, and the like: and with reason, as they are based on scholastic theology, and are wisely applied to mystical theology. There can be no doubt that the soul experiences certain motions both of the intellect and of the will, by the preventive grace of God, and these are called by the Fathers, "illuminations, inspirations, and divine motions." (Conc. Trid. Sess. vi. and Psalm cxviii. and Romans viii.) It is moreover certain, says Suarez (*De Rel.* lib. ix. c. 5. n. 31), that these sometimes are immediately produced by God Himself (*De Inc.* disp. xvii. § 2), and often by our Guardian Angels. And on the other hand, the devil tries to imitate them, in order to pervert the will and darken or mislead the mind. (2 Cor. xi. 14.) The angels, however, can only influence the will through the intellect and the sensitive appetite, through either sensible objects or through the imagination.

The rules then which follow are designed to help us to discriminate these several motions, and to determine from whom they proceed, whether directly from God, or from either the good angel or the evil spirit.

in his rules for "in some degree perceiving and knowing the various motives excited in the soul; the good, that they may be admitted; the bad, that they may be rejected."

2. These contradictory influences and impulses act upon the soul so subtly and incessantly that we must have some rules to guide us in distinguishing between their different effects and motives. As moreover the object of the Exercises is to form the spiritual life within us by the help of prayer and meditation, we are sure to feel many different motions passing through our souls, and to be in danger of being led astray by various illusions, while we are making these Exercises. It is on this account that St. Ignatius has laid down more especially for beginners the following rules, which are fourteen in number, and are intended as well for our own instruction as for the guidance of others. They are founded on Holy Writ and on the experience of men distinguished for piety and learning,[1] and it is of great importance that we should make ourselves thoroughly familiar with them.

3. In directing souls two dangers must be avoided:[2] on the one side we must not believe every spirit, or take notice of every fancy that crosses the brain of excitable and weak-minded persons, following the counsel of St. John,[3] "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God;" and on the other, we must not be too incredulous and bold in despising and rejecting what may be inspirations or impulses from God, remembering how St. Paul[4] teaches us, "Extinguish not the spirit, despise not prophecies, but prove all things, hold fast that which is good, from all appearance of evil refrain yourselves."

4. It must also be remembered that however good these rules may be in themselves, we must have recourse to frequent and earnest prayer, and in the practice of great purity of heart and union with God merit to obtain

[1] Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. nn. 30, 41. Conf. Gerson, *De Prob. Spir.* tr. xvii. and Card. Bona, *De Discret. Spir.* cviii.

[2] Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. n. 41. [3] 1 St. John iv. [4] 1 Thess. v. 19—22.

from Him light and grace to apply them aright, and thus avoid the error of those who presume to direct souls on the principles of what they call common sense.

5. Proceeding now to take these rules of St. Ignatius in detail we observe that referring, as they do, to the beginnings of the spiritual life, when the temptations of the devil are more patent and open, and do not generally approach us under the appearance of good, they correspond to what spiritual writers term the *Purgative Way*, although the Saint nowhere uses that phrase.

They may be classified under these three heads:

(*α*) The different methods employed by the good, and by the bad spirit, in order to affect and move us.

(*β*) The characteristics of spiritual consolation and desolation, and the manner of dealing with them.

(*γ*) The different wiles by which the devil seeks to terrify, dishearten, and bewilder us.

Rule 1. Those who readily and habitually fall into mortal sin, or who are very lax and tepid, our great enemy, the devil, is wont to inspire with a false feeling of security and peace and a momentary enjoyment springing from the gratification of the senses, in order that he may hold them in his grasp and confirm them in their sinful habits. The good spirit, on the contrary, causes in such persons great remorse of conscience and disquiet of mind, in order to rouse them from their sinful ways.

Rule 2. In the case of those who earnestly desire to give themselves to God and have begun a fervent practice of virtue, the direct contrary takes place, for now the devil strives to fill them with fear and anxiety, to harass them with scruples, to perplex them with false and sophistical reasonings, &c.; whereas the good spirit inspires such souls with courage and strength, diffuses into them light, comfort, devotion and peace, smoothing and removing every impediment, that they may make progress in good works.

Rule 3. *Spiritual consolation* is the disposition of the soul in which it begins to be inflamed with the love of its Creator and Lord, and consequently feels that it can no

longer attach itself to any created thing for its own sake, but only in God and for the sake of Him. Spiritual consolation is also that state in which the soul, on account of its sins, or of the sufferings of Christ, or anything connected with His service and praise, sheds many tears out of love for its Lord. Finally, it is that in which the soul feels itself strongly urged to advance in any virtue, such as faith, hope, and charity, or experiences a certain quiet and peace of mind inclining it to prayer and to whatever will conduce to its spiritual progress.

Rule 4. *Spiritual desolation* is marked by directly opposite signs, such as darkness of mind, disquiet, weariness, and repugnance in exercises of piety and devotion, accompanied by attraction towards unworthy and earthly objects. Then follows mistrust, loss of hope and of love, when the soul finds itself slothful, tepid, sad, and, as it were, separated from God.

Here I would remark that we are sometimes inclined to give the devil more than his due by ascribing to him certain dispositions of the soul which are the result of our own morbid imagination, or perhaps arise from some purely physical cause or infirmity, as from fatigue, or from the weather, head-ache, &c.

Rules 5 and 6. In time of desolation we must not dream of making any substantial change in our state or course of life, or omit our good resolutions and works of piety. Some accidental changes we may indeed profitably make, such as a more careful examination of ourselves, more frequent prayer, or some addition to our penances, thereby to assuage the bitterness of our desolation and baffle the efforts of the devil. Experience proves that these are excellent means of regaining our former fervour and peace of mind. That we may, however, avoid any error on this point, it is well to consult our spiritual director.

Rule 7. In times of aridity and desolation we must reflect that, in leaving the soul to the exercise of its natural powers, without any feeling of fervour or the presence of His special graces, but always with a sufficient

measure of grace, God is putting our steadfastness to the test and giving us an occasion of greater merit, when we thus resist the various agitations and temptations of the enemy, by the assistance of God, which still ever remains with us.[1]

Rule 8. In times of desolation let us arm ourselves against the troubles which harass us with patience and resignation to the will of God, in the full assurance that we shall shortly be consoled, and receive from Him suitable help and comfort.

Rule 9. The three principal reasons why God withdraws His consolations from us are: first, because we are tepid and negligent in our spiritual observances; or secondly, that He would test us for what we are worth, and what exact progress we make in His holy service when His graces are suspended; or, lastly, that we may be fully persuaded we can of ourselves neither acquire or retain fervent devotion, ardent love, or any other kind of spiritual consolation, but that these are entirely the gift or favour of God our Lord, and that consequently we have no excuse for either pride or vainglory by ascribing to ourselves either devotion or any other kind of consolation.

Thus God makes known to us our miseries, and thereby teaches us how to understand and compassionate those of others, according to the words of St. Paul.[2]

When we feel no strength to walk, or are blind and cannot see, let us raise up our hearts in holy confidence and say: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and strengthen me with a perfect spirit."[3]

Rules 10 and 11. During seasons of consolation we must deeply humble ourselves in the remembrance how little we can do when deprived of that favour, and fore-

[1] "Per naturales vires significari videntur naturales facultates, non tamen ut operantes per solam naturalem virtutem sed ut adjutas divina gratia et illi cooperantes." (Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. n. 44.)

[2] "Who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err: because he himself also is compassed with infirmity." (Hebrews v. 2.)

[3] Psalm l. 14, and Cf. à Kempis, iii. c. 53.

casting a future time of desolation, brace ourselves up with courage to meet it.

On the other hand, in desolation let us reflect that with sufficient grace from God we can do much towards overcoming all our enemies, and so nerve ourselves by the thought of the consolation that is in store for us.

Rules 12, 13, and 14 explain to us three wiles wherewith the devil is wont to add force to his most violent temptations:

The first is, when the devil, strong in his malice though weak in spite of himself, like some virago, tries to inspire us with fear and cowardice. Unless we treat him with scorn and contempt, his rage only increases, but if he sees that relying upon God we show a bold front, he loses all courage and becomes powerless.

The second of his wiles is when like some seducer he attacks us, covertly plotting our ruin. It is thus that an evil-disposed lover tries to allure the victim of his passion from the home of a good father, or a wife from her husband, binding her to secrecy and silence regarding his plans, for fear lest his design be defeated. In like manner the devil tries to dissuade and prevent us from betraying his wicked and malicious deceits to our confessor or director, knowing that otherwise he is sure to be frustrated in his object.

In the third place, as an able general who wishes to capture a citadel, first takes a careful survey to find where it is weakest and best open to attack, and then begins the assault, so the arch-enemy of our human nature carefully considers our state and position in respect of the theological, cardinal, and moral virtues, and then exerts all his force against us at the particular point where we are weakest. We should therefore be beforehand with him, and examine in what we are most deficient or into what fault we most frequently fall. To this purpose we must make our examinations of conscience and our confessions with all care, and should spare no pains to strengthen ourselves against his attacks.

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

WHEREBY A MAN MAY LEARN TO CONQUER HIMSELF, AND MAY SO ORDER AND REGULATE HIS LIFE, AS NOT TO BE INFLUENCED BY ANY INORDINATE AFFECTION.

In these words St. Ignatius begins his Book of Spiritual Exercises, and lays down the double end proposed, namely, complete conquest of self, and the perfect regulation of life, according to the principles of faith and right reason, for the attainment of his end and the accomplishment of his destiny.

He next makes an important observation for the mutual help and benefit of the director and of him who is about to make the Exercises, which is to the following effect:

"We must suppose that every good Christian will always be more ready to interpret in a favourable sense than to condemn any obscure or doubtful proposition of another.

"If, however, he finds that it cannot be held or admitted, he will in a spirit of love and charity correct him who has asserted it: but if this proves ineffectual, he will then make use of all suitable means whereby he may bring him to a right sense and save him from asserting what is false and erroneous."

How prudent it was in St. Ignatius to place this observation in the very commencement of his book is manifest, for not unfrequently those who enter upon the Exercises may be imbued with false or dangerous principles or views either on social, philosophical, or

theological matters. And on the other hand, the Saint having suffered so much at Alcalà, Toledo, Paris, Venice, and Rome, from the false interpretations put upon various passages of his writings, may have wished to prepare the director and exercitant against any prejudices or misapprehensions under which they might be labouring, and thus suggest the surest and most charitable means of removing them.

THE FIRST WEEK.

PREPARATORY MEDITATION.

THIS meditation may be made with the view of disposing the soul to perform the Exercises well, and thus derive all possible fruit from them. It will enable us to appreciate the special grace of God which they present to us,—to realize our need of them, and to inspire in us those dispositions which are requisite for succeeding in them. These dispositions are, according to Suarez,[1] in the first place, a determination to seek the most holy will of God and His greater glory; and in the second, an entire indifference as to the means by which to secure it.

Hence whoever makes the Spiritual Exercises in earnest must not select those means according to his own taste and inclination, but solely according to the manifestation of God's will.[2]

The meditation will consist of three points.

1. The excellence of the Exercises. 2. The need we have to make them. 3. The dispositions required in us if we are to make them well.

After placing ourselves in the presence of God, and making an act of faith and humility, while we prostrate ourselves before His Divine Majesty, we will offer up to Him all our thoughts, words, actions, intentions, and endeavours, desiring that they may be directed purely

[1] *De Rel.* lib. ix. c. vii. n. 6. [2] *Direct.* ii. nn. 4, 5.

to His Divine service and praise, to the promotion of His greater glory, and to the sanctification of our own souls.[1]

Prelude 1.—Let us in spirit place ourselves *alone* before the throne of God, the Supreme Lord and Master, who beholds us.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg with all our hearts that He would be pleased to help us in entering upon the retreat and in deriving from it the fruit of which we stand so much in need.

First Point.—Excellence of the Exercises.—If we consider them in themselves, they contain doctrines inspired by the Holy Ghost, drawn from the Holy Scriptures, adapted to the practice of spiritual life, and approved by the Holy See[2] as being "replete with piety and holiness, admirably fitted to fill the soul with holy dispositions, and most profitable to the interior man."

They are, says St. Ignatius, "Spiritual Exercises designed to teach and enable a man to overcome himself and to regulate his life in defiance of any inordinate affection."

They are exercises which will lead us to overcome self, and to determine our manner of life, without allowing ourselves to be influenced by any affection which is not approved by the teachings of faith or right reason.

We can then, if we really wish, learn once for all to overcome ourselves, secure true peace of heart, and so order our lives as to work out our salvation—and all this without vexing our spirits or straining our minds, no matter how strong our passions or inveterate our habits: for under the guidance of God St. Ignatius has arranged all with the most gentle discretion, and supplied us with

[1] This method of commencing the meditation should be employed in the beginning of each spiritual exercise: and thus we shall comply with the counsel of Ecclus. xviii. 23: "Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as one that tempteth God."

[2] Bull of Approbation by Paul III. A.D. 1548, by Julius III. A.D. 1554, and Gregory XIII. A.D. 1580.

every means for securing the end. In the first place we are instructed how to banish from our hearts all evil affections, and having done this, we shall be in better dispositions to seek and to discover the will of God concerning ourselves and all the circumstances of our daily life. We shall then be able to form such resolutions as God will show us to be pleasing to Him. The Saint supplies us with suitable counsels by which we may be enabled to persevere, and with powerful incitements to avoid the snares and repel the assaults of the enemy. How many have entered upon these Exercises with souls totally enslaved to the world, to the flesh, and to the devil, and have come from them as completely devoted to God's service.

Let us realize the favour God is doing us in granting us this opportunity, and let us seriously resolve to turn it to advantage.

Second Point.—The *need we have of this retreat.*—There are some who think that retreats are suited only to Religious, or to holy persons aiming at high perfection. Yet they are far more necessary for those living in the world, where false maxims and evil examples and constant occasions render sin more easy, whereas the means of avoiding it are fewer and harder to find. Have we no past to repair, nor present to correct and reform, nor provision to make for the future?

The *past* may tell us of many and grievous sins, without perhaps any real repentance for them. Confessions have been defective, Communions without profit, besides omissions, injustices, scandals, uncharitableness, and the like.

In the *present* we may find so little that is good, and that little so imperfectly done—prayer without fervour, devotions without merit, and sacraments without fruit. Preoccupied by the world as if we were always to remain in it—what are our affections and our actions?

Do not continuous dissipation, false principles, vain pursuits, uncontrolled passions, inveterate habits, and sins or faults without number, form the staple of our life?

To know that we may die any moment, and to live for five minutes in mortal sin, is an unpardonable rashness. What, then, shall we call it to live in this state for months and years? Then as to venial sins and abuses of grace, what a fearful account we may have to render?

Reason and experience proclaim our *future*, if we continue to live as we are now doing. We can easily turn aside the bed of a stream near its source, but if we allow it to continue its course until it swells out into a broad and deep river, this becomes impossible. So is it with the sinner—the longer he continues his life of sin, the harder it is to change its current. How many once better than ourselves, are now lost! Let us therefore dread lest we too become hardened in our sins. "A hard heart shall fear evil at the last: and he that loveth danger shall perish in it."[1] Wherefore let us follow the counsel of God, "Do, my son, what I say, and deliver thyself."[2]

Third Point.—Dispositions for making the retreat well.

1. We must form a right idea of it—how it is intended to affect the soul, and our *own soul in particular*. How it is to enable us so to dispose our lives that we may go on securely, advance daily, and finally reach our eternal home. Surely of all things this is the most important, and one which most vitally affects us.

2. We must go through it with great generosity of heart, and without reserve, leaving ourselves in the hands of God to do with us as He pleases, ever ready to grant whatever He may ask, and to make any sacrifice which He may call for. No matter how holy we may be, there is no one that enters on a retreat who is not called upon by God to make some *sacrifice*, either for the correction of some fault, or for the acquisition of some virtue. This should be ascertained and determined upon by each from the commencement of the Exercises, with a view to the Election in the second part.

3. We must have full confidence and hope in God—knowing that no one ever hoped in Him in vain, nor confided too much in Him. Our undertaking is a hard

[1] Ecclus. iii. 27. [2] Prov. vi. 3.

one, and impossible if left to ourselves, but our strength is our hope in God.[1] The greater our hope, the more blessed shall we be; and the measure of His mercy will be according to our hope. "Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we have hoped in Thee."[2]

4. We must have courage to face the difficulties which the devil will put in our way, and which our own sloth and cowardice will create. We need it, for we shall have to fight. "Fear not and be not dismayed, because the Lord thy God is with thee in all things."[3] God is with us, and through Him we shall conquer.

End with colloquy and *Pater noster*.

[1] Isaias xxx. 15. [2] Psalm xxxii. 22. [3] Josue i. 9.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION.

MAN was created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul; and the other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created. Whence it follows, that man must make use of them in so far as they help him to attain his end, and in the same way he ought to withdraw himself from them in so far as they hinder him from it. It is therefore necessary that we should make ourselves indifferent to all created things, in so far as it is left to the liberty of our free-will to do so, and is not forbidden; in such sort that we do not for our part wish for health rather than sickness, for wealth rather than poverty, for honour rather than dishonour, for a long life rather than a short one; and so in all other things, desiring and choosing only those which most lead us to the end for which we were created.

As an Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius lays down one great truth for consideration, which he calls by the name of the Principle and Foundation. Just as in every science certain first principles, too evident to stand in need of proof, are laid down, from which all its conclusions are deduced and developed, so in the science of salvation all its conclusions are evolved from this primary truth. St. Ignatius also calls it the Foundation: for as in raising a structure it is necessary to secure a solid foundation proportionate to the building which it is intended to support and hold firmly together, so this truth is the only solid basis on which the whole moral and spiritual life can be securely supported. Hence it is evident how important it is for us to consider this truth deeply, and how necessary for us thoroughly to master it and bring it home to ourselves personally. For as there is no science without its first principles, no solid and stable building without a foundation, so there can be no real development of spiritual life and no permanent fruit from the Exercises unless we are first imbued with this great truth.

Moreover, the more deeply the mind is impressed with and convinced of it, the greater and more solid will be the fruits which it will produce: and consequently no pains or time should be spared in imbuing ourselves with it before proceeding to the consideration of the other truths proposed to us later on.

St. Ignatius does not present it under the form of a meditation, nor assign any special method or time for its consideration, but supposes us to dwell upon it as long as we find necessary. Many advantages, however, will manifestly accrue from treating the subject under the usual form of a meditation.[1]

[1] This consideration our Saint proposed to himself and to his first companions when as yet they were in the world, and of course, as the economy of the Book of Spiritual Exercises shows, it was preparatory to and formed the basis of the election of a state of life. To ourselves, however, it is of equal importance as being our preparation for electing

We shall therefore divide it into three parts: and on each suggest certain practical reflections.

Part I.

"*Man is created to praise, to reverence, and to serve God our Lord*" (First Section); "*and in this way to secure the salvation of his soul*" (Second Section).

After beginning the First of these Sections by offering ourselves and all our thoughts, words, actions, &c. to God and after humbling ourselves before Him let us,

Prelude 1 imagine ourselves standing alone before Him as the one great source of existence, the Lord of all Creation.

Prelude 2 Let us beg the grace to understand thoroughly this truth, so that our minds may be practically convinced of it; that we may know fully our end, and all that is needful in us for its attainment.[1]

First Point.—"Man is created." For long years this universe has existed, with all its forms of life—but I was not in it—I was nothing. How did I appear? Who ushered me into being and life? I came not of *myself*, for from nothing can come nothing. It could not be mere *chance*, for that excludes order, and design, and permanence. It could not be, except as a necessary condition, those whom I call my parents, for they could neither mould my body,[2] nor transmit to me a soul. Nor could it be by evolution, for that is against experience, and a first principle of reason, making the

the degree of perfection suited to the state, office, or mode of life in which God has placed us. It is with the same view that St. Ignatius lays down this consideration as the opening of the First Week, reserving that of "the Kingdom of Christ" for the Second Week, and the contemplation of the "Two Standards" for the Public Life of our Lord. There is no preparatory meditation for the Fourth Week, as our election is supposed to be already made.

[1] "O Lord, make me know my end, and what is the number of my days, that I may see what is wanting to me." (Psalm xxxviii. 5.)

[2] "I know not how you were formed in my womb; for I neither gave you breath, nor soul, nor life, neither did I frame the limbs of every one of you." (2 Mach. vii. 22.)

effect superior to that which is its cause. Nor can it be from any contingent being, seeing that such are only endowed with life sufficient for themselves. It then follows that I must come from God. And that is what faith teaches.[1]

Have I ever realized this great truth, and brought it home to myself?

Second Point.—But for what has God placed me in the world?

Could He have created me for no other purpose or end, than the stones serve which are scattered on the roadside?[2] No! An intelligent being could not have created me for this. Nor could He have made me and left me to be the sport of my own whims, as the peasant leaves his cattle to roam at will in search of food. All things else He has created for their respective ends, the sun to shine, the earth to germinate, fire to warm, &c. So too, must He have created man for a special end; the more so because man is the most exalted and the most excellent of the works of His hands. The infinite wisdom, power, and goodness employed in giving me the noblest of natures prove that He could not have created me for a life of mere chance, without any rule or law proportioned to that nature. Since He has given me a mind capable of knowing Him, and a heart able to love Him, He cannot have placed me in the world as though He were nothing to me. Reason itself proclaims this. The fool alone can call this in question.[3]

It would be at once unworthy of both God and myself, and would argue the absence of wisdom, prudence, and goodness in the Creator.

Third Point.—Why, then, has God created me? For an end worthy of myself and of His own infinite nature.

[1] "God created man to His own image." (Genesis i. 27.) "There is one most high Creator Almighty, who sitteth upon His throne and who is the God of dominion." (Ecclus. i. 8.)

[2] "Remember what my substance is: for hast Thou made all the children of men in vain?" (Psalm lxxxviii. 48.)

[3] "A vain man is lifted up into pride, and thinketh himself born free as a wild ass's colt." (Job xi. 12.)

First, for His own glory;[1] seeing that He has created every man "to His own praise, and name, and glory: that thou mayst be a holy people of the Lord thy God."[2] He needed not to have created me, but wishing so to do, He was bound to create me for Himself. The infinite perfection of His Divine nature demands this, and my boundless needs require it.

Again, why did He create me? It was that in holy fear I might keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man and of every individual man who has a soul and body, and it affects his every thought, word, and deed, whether he be old or young, learned or unlearned, rich or poor. "Let us all hear together the conclusion of the discourse. Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is all man." I am then here solely for this object. If I fail to attain this, I am worse than useless in creation, I am positively a nuisance and incumbrance to it, a cause of discord within the harmony of creation.

In the colloquy I will express my grateful thanks for my creation, my sorrow for the manner in which I have ignored the main end and object of my life, and also my confusion at having been so worthless a servant.

Conclude with the "Our Father."

Second Section.

"*And in this way to secure the salvation of his soul.*"

The commencement of the following meditation, together with the preparatory prayer, will be as usual.

Prelude 1.—I place myself at the verge of time, looking on God seated upon His eternal throne, and surrounded by countless ministering spirits.

Prelude 2.—I beg of His Divine Majesty a deep and practical knowledge of the importance of my salvation, and grace to strain every nerve to acquire it.

[1] Isaias xliii. 7. [2] Deut. xxvi. 19.

First Point.—"*Man shall go into the home* of *eternity.*"[1] After a life of a few short years on this earth, he must at last die and enter upon a new life which shall never end. This earth is only a place of passage, the other life is called man's *home*—and must either be spent in Heaven with God, or in Hell along with the infernal spirits. There is no possibility of escape. Have I tried to bring this truth home to myself? For me it must be either Heaven for ever or else Hell for ever; either honour, glory, and delight to be for ever enjoyed, and never lost or diminished; or else disgrace, infamy, and pain to be ever endured and never alleviated. The choice rests entirely with myself, and the price which is to purchase the bliss of Heaven for ever is only that I should praise, reverence, and serve God during the brief space of my life here on earth. Having once entered upon life, I must proceed along it for ever, since there is no halting on the way.

Second Point.—What is the value of eternal salvation? This may be estimated by the help of two principles, namely, by the teaching and example of those whose judgment is unimpeachable, and by its own intrinsic nature and importance. First, how have the wise and good and prudent valued it?[2] Ask St. Paul and the martyrs of Holy Church how they valued it. They will all reply that the tribulation of this life could not compare with their weight of glory. Ask of the Confessors and Virgins, and with one voice they will reply that their lives of labour, of penance, of poverty, sacrifice, and detachment, are as nothing when compared with eternal salvation. Again, how does God Himself esteem it? The Eternal Father sent His only Son from Heaven, and offered Him up in sacrifice in order to provide me with the means of securing it, &c.

His Son willingly became Man and embraced all which that mystery involved for the same end; for this He established His Church and the holy sacraments, and the

[1] Eccles. xii. 5. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 17.

one great Sacrifice of the New Law. Then my soul's salvation must be of inestimable value.[1]

Again we measure the preciousness to us of anything according to its intrinsic worth and the perfect security with which it can be possessed. Now ear hath not heard, nor can man conceive the bliss, honour, and glory of eternal salvation: and it is secured for all eternity, and once possessed can never be forfeited.

Third Point.—We may judge its value also from the efforts of the devil to induce us to forfeit it. What energy[2] and constancy he exercises in order to ruin us. With what false promises of transient benefits he tries to lure us from the way of salvation—benefits in themselves unreal, incapable of satisfying an immortal soul, and such as it is beyond his power to assure us of even for a day, or a moment. Oh, then, my soul, learn the immense importance of thy salvation, and resolve to spend thyself in reverence to God, in His praise and service, for thus thou shalt save thyself and shalt escape a terrible fate.

Conclude with a colloquy of gratitude for God's goodness and of bitter regret for your own past neglect, and resolve firmly with God's grace to have ever on your lips those words of St. Aloysius, "How does this effect my Eternity?" End with the "Our Father."

Part II.

"*The other things on the face of the earth were created for man's sake, and in order to aid him in the prosecution of the end for which he was created. Whence it follows that man must make use of them in so far as they help him to attain his end,*" &c.

Having seen the end of man's life and being, we are naturally led to ask what is the origin and end of all other things on the face of the earth, on which man

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 St. Peter i. 18.

[2] "Because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." (1 St. Peter v. 8.)

is so dependent, and with which he is so intimately connected.

And here I would observe that by "other things" we are to understand not merely creatures, but also circumstances of time and place and person by which we may be individually affected: amongst these are the facts of our birth at a particular time, in a particular country, and of parents holding such a social position.

ON THE OBJECT AND USE OF CREATURES.

The preparatory prayer and commencement as usual.

Prelude 1.—I imagine myself as being alone and taking from some high mountain a general survey of the world.

Prelude 2.—I beg of God to implant deeply and indelibly in my mind the practical knowledge of this second part of the Foundation.

First Point.—With what an infinite number and variety of creatures the universe is filled! The heavens with their countless millions of mighty worlds, that look so small, and vary in size, distance, colour, &c. The air which like a great sea is filled with microscopic life, and supports that life in the different forms of the vegetative and animal creation. What an infinite variety of vegetable life, of fruits and of flowers, and each provided with its special properties, shape, and colour. Then I behold the endless varieties in form and plumage of the feathered creation, all characterized by their individual habits. Next I pass in review the vast array of the animal creation. Lastly, I look into the small world of myself, which embraces not only intellectual life, but also sensitive and vegetative life. Further, it contains a mysterious connection with the exterior world by means of the five senses, of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feeling, and is endowed with the faculty of apprehending truth, of willing the good, and of recalling the past.

Second Point.—Whence come these? Are they all or is any one of them the result of chance? Reason answers, No: because there is not one which does not manifest and proclaim *design* in its being. Are they the result of spontaneous evolution? No. For they declare themselves to be effects of preceding causes. They do indeed come from those which precede them as conditions "of their being," but they do not borrow from them their *life*. Whence then do they come? Only from Him who is the fulness and the source of all life and being—from God. They each and all have derived their life from the Great Creator. All are united with Him by the link of a creature proceeding from its Creator. All then are His sole and absolute property; nor can He divest Himself of His supreme dominion over even the most minute among them, although He may commit to others the *dominium utile*, or the use of them, but that alone, and no more.

Third Point.—Why then has He created them? Not indeed for any use or requirement of His own, being all-sufficient in Himself and infinitely happy from all eternity. Nor again for the benefit of His angels; for visible and material things have no proportion with these invisible and spiritual natures. Nor could it be for the sake of the irrational animals, which are incapable of either knowing or duly appreciating them. It remains then that they are simply created for man.

God created and arranged this vast universe, great, varied, and beautiful as it is; and lastly He created man, placing all these things at his disposal,[1] with the design that some should supply the means for his support, others for the preservation of his health; that some should relieve his weariness, and others provide for his pleasure and delight. In short, God intended them to administer to the profit, honour, comfort, and pleasure of man.

He had no intention that man should devote himself

[1] "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast subjected all things under his feet." (Psalm viii. 6.)

to them as his end and his all. To suppose this would be the act of a fool.[1] For material things cannot satisfy man's soul, nor temporal things content an immortal being: but they are provided for man's use in the execution and attainment of that for which he is made, as the steps of a ladder by which he may ascend to his home, as the instruments to be employed in the service of his master.

Fourth Point.—But how is this to be done? In different ways, (1) all proclaim the existence of God and disclose some one or other of His attributes and perfections, such as His power, wisdom, goodness, beauty, providence, &c., making it inexcusable to deny God.[2] (2) All invite our admiration, love, and desire to serve our Creator for His generosity, for the variety and number of His benefits, for His goodness, &c. (3) Some administer to life and thus assist us to persevere in His service, and yet if we give ourselves up to the love of creatures we frustrate the designs of God and become their slaves, instead of being their masters.[3] We cause confusion in the Creator's plans by making the creatures our end; and thus degrading ourselves and insulting God, we incur the reproach of ingratitude and injustice.

Fifth Point.—Conclusion.—If I am created in order to praise, reverence, and serve God, and if He supplies me with the creatures which belong to Him, that I may make use of them for that purpose only, it follows that my use of them must be regulated solely by the extent to which they enable me to fulfil this end; and just as the artist employs his colours, or the artisan his tools only so far as they help him in the execution of his design, in

[1] "For they have said, reasoning with themselves but not right: Come let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth." (Wisdom ii. 1, 6.)

[2] "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power also and divinity, so that they are inexcusable." (Romans i. 20.)

[3] "Who changed the truth into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed for ever. Amen." (Romans i. 25.)

like manner must I also be guided in regard to the use of everything. Each object and circumstance in this life is an instrument to help me to attain my end, either by its application or its rejection. Of these some are always good; others are sometimes good and sometimes bad, and in the latter case they must be rejected; others are always bad and by the rejection of them further me towards the fulfilment of my destiny.

We may not be guided by feeling or sentiment, but solely by reason; being moved to seek them, not on account of the pleasure they afford us, but because it is a matter of duty.[1] In the use of the faculties of our soul, of the senses of our body, or of external things, this principle must be our sole guide. Let us conclude by rendering thanks to the bountiful generosity of God in the abundant means with which He has provided us; and let us cover ourselves with confusion for having perverted them to our own disgrace, in the height of our ingratitude towards Him; making at the same time most earnest resolutions for the future.

End with the "Our Father."

Part III.

After considering my own origin and consequent dependence on God, the end of my own existence upon this earth, and at the same time the origin and end assigned by Him to all other creatures, it remains for me to consider further what right reason dictates should be my disposition of mind and heart towards them, and what view I should take of them in order to make a right use of them. This consideration forms the third part of the Foundation.

"*Wherefore it is necessary that we should make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as it is left to the liberty*

[1] "Advise not with fools, for they cannot love but such things as please them." (Ecclus. viii. 20.)

of our free-will to do so, and is not forbidden; in such sort that we do not for our part wish for health rather than sickness, for wealth rather than poverty, for honour rather than dishonour, for a long life rather than a short one," &c. If we are to make use of creatures as reason inculcates, and only so far as they promote the fulfilment of our earthly destiny, we must constantly strive to preserve our minds in an even balance and indifference of choice, so as to avoid being guided by mere feeling.

Why does St. Ignatius enumerate these four classes of creatures?

Perhaps it is because the generality of men find them to be the most difficult points on which to practise this holy indifference. It also may be that all creatures can be classed under one or other of these heads. Or perhaps it is that they form the chief objects to which men are often unduly attached.

St. Ignatius does not suppose that we can preserve our minds in so perfect a state of detachment as to be free from all feelings of preference, but he enjoins us to try and act as if we were indifferent.

THE NATURE AND PRACTICE OF INDIFFERENCE.

The immediate preparation and the Preparatory Prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Imagine yourself alone before God, who is the Lord and Master of all men, the preserver and ruler of all His creatures.

Prelude 2.—Beg of Him a deep conviction of the necessity of acquiring this indifference, in order to regulate your life aright and to proceed safely in the way of eternal salvation, under every circumstance in which you may be placed.

First Point.—The necessity of this indifference. As reasonable beings we are bound to use creatures as means

for attaining the end towards which they are intended to lead us. This obligation is always incumbent upon us, no matter what may be our feelings in their regard. Now all creatures are purely and simply means, and consequently must be employed as such without any regard to feeling, or to pain or pleasure arising from them, if we are really to attain to indifference. Besides which it is unworthy of man to act simply from feeling. The brute creation are guided by instinct or feeling given to them for that purpose, but man excels them in this that God has bestowed on him reason to be his guide in the natural order, which alone comes under our consideration at present. God in creating all things, with the exception of man, did not prefer one above another, as far as they themselves were concerned, but only in proportion as they were more or less adapted to the help of man. Our perfection therefore consists in being able to view creatures in the same light. This indifference is moreover necessary if we are to enjoy true peace and to be free from all anxiety, care, and unhappiness. If I look back on the past and inquire into the cause of the many sorrows and pains with which life has been clouded, I shall find the explanation to be the lack of this holy indifference. If again I ask how the saints, amid all their trials, sufferings, and persecutions, retained always their happiness and peace of mind, the answer is that they were really and habitually indifferent in regard of every created thing viewed in itself.

Second Point.—The extent to which this indifference must reach. It must include every creature, but especially must be equally ready to accept either:

1. *Wealth or Poverty*, and the convenience of the one, or the inconveniences of the other. By riches, we must here understand not only material possessions,[1] but also

[1] If we consider material possessions, qualities of character, intellectual gifts, and the like, objectively, and as they are in themselves, they are good and are creatures of God; but subjectively, and in relation to man, they become good or bad according to the right or wrong use he makes of them. To secure ourselves from the misuse of all these things, the great means is the state of practical indifference.

internal gifts, such as talents of mind, disposition of heart, qualities of character, and the like; and by poverty, the absence of many or all of these, including the lack of accomplishments derived from education, as also of personal attractions. Then, again, under the word riches are to be included a natural tendency to goodness and piety, facility in the practice of virtue, immunity from violent passions, and the possession of special gifts of grace; while, under poverty is intimated the absence of all the above advantages in a greater or less degree.

2. Holy indifference is also ready to accept either *Honour or Dishonour*, whether these regard birth or station in life; whether they come from strangers, friends, relations or enemies, whether they be shown in private or public, by persons of high or low position—we must be able to say with St. Paul:[1] "I know both how to be brought low, and I know how to abound, . . . both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." Doing this we shall be well instructed in the lesson of so adapting ourselves to all things, as to be ready for whatever God shall ordain.

3. Holy Indifference equally accepts either *Sickness or Health*, since both are means or opportunities for the fulfilment of our end or destiny, and consequently we must not be unduly anxious or careful to avoid the one or secure the other.

4. We must act in the same way as regards a *short or a long life*. In fact, this indifference must extend to everything which is left to our free choice, and which God has not prohibited or not commanded. It is at the same time clear that whatever is forbidden by the Creator cannot be a matter of indifference to our minds.

Third Point.—In the practice of this indifference, then, we must not consider the material side of things, but only how far they are adapted to the end for which we are created, and we must employ them accordingly. Just as when I want to cross the sea I choose the safest and

[1] Philipp. iv. 12.

swiftest vessel, when I want to take a journey I take the best and safest route; in like manner having a soul to save I adopt the best means for ensuring its salvation.

This is the only true prudence, this is the absolutely necessary disposition.[1] Let us then be convinced of the importance of this indifference and let us diligently root out every inordinate affection in our souls; for these alone are the real obstacles to its attainment.

We must also, in conclusion, full of confusion for having so long ignored the necessity of this indifference, and having so constantly gone astray,[2] now firmly resolve for the future to secure true peace, and to repent of our past neglect.[3]

How great a folly it is to harbour within ourselves a disposition, which not only closes the door of the heart against all real peace, but exposes us at any moment to become the victims of terrible anxiety and misery! How unworthy of a being who takes pride in possessing the gift of reason! End with the "Our Father."

THE MOTIVES OF INDIFFERENCE.

Whoever fails to attain his end, does so either from over-attachment to creatures, or from undue aversion to them. He becomes attached to ease and comfort, to the pleasures of sense, to riches, to honours, and the esteem of men; and he has in proportion an aversion for inconvenience, pains, sufferings, labours, trials, and the contempt of others.

It therefore is of vital importance that I should establish firmly and deeply in my soul so perfect an equilibrium and indifference, as to be ever ready to reject

[1] "O that they would be wise, and would understand and would provide for their last end." (Deut. xxxii. 29.)

[2] "I have gone astray like a sheep that was lost; seek thy servant, because I have not forgotten thy commandments." (Psalm cxviii. 176.)

[3] "For if thou hadst walked in the way of God, thou hadst surely dwelt in peace for ever." (Baruch iii. 13.)

those things that are dearest and embrace those that are most repugnant, were my doing so to assist me in the attainment of my last end, and tend towards God's greater praise and service.

The preparatory prayer and commencement as usual.

Prelude 1.—I imagine myself alone in the presence of God, as being the Supreme Ruler and Director of myself and of all things.

Prelude 2.—I will beg earnestly that I may appreciate duly, and fully realize the *motives* for making myself indifferent to all created things.

First Point.—God's supreme Dominion calls for this indifference. My obligation in life being to praise, reverence, and serve God, I must strive to perform in all circumstances His ever-blessed will. Now this can never be done as long as my own will is not conformed to His, towards which holy indifference is a necessary step. For it is God who has to determine the manner and circumstances of that service. He is the Master who commands, I am the servant whose duty it is to obey. So it is with the angels in Heaven. All are engaged in praising and serving God, while some remain in adoration before Him, others are employed in the guardianship of men—one being assigned to the monarch, another to his subject, one to the rich and learned, another to the poor and ignorant; each, meanwhile, faithfully carrying out the duty assigned him, and that most *cheerfully*, *promptly*, and *unremittingly*. God's dominion has no limit, and He has the fullest authority to prescribe the manner of my service. As the potter can use the vessel which he has moulded for what purpose he pleases, so likewise can God employ me; it rests entirely with Him.[1]

He may place me in darkness, in sorrow, temptation, trial, and pain. It is for me to accept any of these according to His holy will, and in this way fulfil my end. Or He may will that fortune should smile upon me, that honour and success should attend me; my part is to

[1] Job x. 10.

resign myself into His hands and thus to serve Him. Well, then, I must acknowledge and bow down before His supreme authority. I must trample on all inclinations to rebel or murmur at whatsoever He may ordain. My only desire must be to find out His holy will and execute it, and to stamp out my own will.

Second Point.—The tender consideration of God in His Providence over us claims this indifference.

So long as we are the subjects of one who is endowed with great knowledge and prudence, and who is inspired with great love for and great interest in us, we feel that we can abandon ourselves with a perfect confidence, free from all care and anxiety to him and to his guidance. Now this is exactly my case; for is not God the perfection of infinite wisdom and knowledge? He knows all things and all their bearings; He knows, also, myself, and all the influences which each object drawn into relation with me could exercise upon me; how far it can benefit me or prove an obstacle in the way that should lead me to my last end.

Moreover, He loves me with an infinite and undying love, with a love greater than that of a mother. He is more deeply concerned in my salvation than I am myself. He is ever arranging and disposing things and events for my special benefit here, and for my eternal salvation hereafter.

Lastly, His power is infinite, the Almighty, without whose especial permission not the slightest event can happen, not even a hair can fall from my head; and He will not allow all the forces of Heaven, Earth, or Hell, to prevent a man against his own will from fulfilling his destiny.

Knowing then God's providence in my regard, His love for me, the interest He feels in my eternal happiness, and His power to help and protect me, it would be folly and madness not to conform and abandon myself entirely and in all things to His ever adorable will, with perfect indifference to all things else. Alas! of how sad a succession of anxieties, miseries, and cares has my

past life been made up. How truly may I affirm that the way of peace I have not known. And this entirely through my own fault, because of the absence of this indifference. What a complete stranger has peace been to me, through lack of faith and confidence in the loving and tender providence of God towards me.

Third Point.—A sense of the Justice of God should urge me to indifference.

If I do not submit myself to the providence of God and embrace those means which He supplies for the attainment of my end, I expose myself to the danger of falling into the hands of His justice. And what must be the consequence? I shall bring upon myself a great weight of suffering. I shall and must endure all that sorrow and pain, that contempt and persecution which from eternity God has appointed for me. If I meet them with a holy indifference, and bear them patiently, I shall please God, who will strengthen me with His grace, and will grant me peace and tranquillity, sweetening the bitterness of the cross. But without this indifference, I shall be impatient and displeasing to God, who will withhold from me all grace, comfort, and peace. I shall lose merit also, and thus diminish my glory for all eternity, and shall grow remiss, and greatly endanger my perseverance and eternal happiness. Besides this, I render myself liable to many and grave temptations of anger, of despondency, of cowardice, of human respect, pride, and neglect of prayer. I lay myself open to impulsiveness, self-will, dissipation, and the lawlessness of unbridled passions. For overcoming all these perils special help from God is needed; but how can I expect God to assist me if, through the little value I set on indifference, I fail to submit myself to Him, and to His disposal in my regard?

Humbled at the sight of my past and present neglect of this spirit, I must now with a true feeling of shame and confusion implore of God to grant me this grace for the time to come; and so end with the "Our Father."

In respect of impediments to the attainment of indifference, these arise from one of three sources, of which the most common lies in the imagination and in the senses. External objects act upon our senses, and these in their turn excite the imagination. Such phantoms, often numberless and very vivid, assail the soul with so great violence as to obscure, confuse, and almost paralyse its vision, and in some way to fascinate it, so that it seems to see, hear, feel, and be certain of things that have no objective existence at all, while any care for the eternal good is lost in the anxieties of earth and of time,[1] and the imagination, reacting on the senses, excites them to seek for gratification, dissipation, and pleasure, passing from one indulgence to another, until life becomes a mere circle of fraud and delusion.[2]

Another obstacle to indifference is the harbouring of false principles in the mind,[3] by which it persuades itself that certain things are either not bad at all, or less bad than we suppose, verifying the words of the Royal Psalmist.[4] It judges things, not according to their real nature and truth, nor according to the teachings of faith, nor according to any substantial quality in them, but from false and deceitful appearances, according to the estimation of worldlings, forgetting what St. John has said,[5] "that the whole world is seated in wickedness," that it is the enemy of man, and that its teaching is "earthly, sensual, and devilish."[6]

The last impediment to indifference is to be found in the heart and its carnal appetites. This body of ours is

[1] "Wo to you that call evil good and good evil: that put darkness for light and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." (Isaias v. 20.)

[2] "For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind." (Wisdom iv. 12.)

[3] "And they themselves lie in wait for their own blood, and practise deceits against their own souls." (Prov. i. 18.)

[4] "The sons of men are liars in the balances, that by vanity they may together deceive." (Psalm lxi. 10.)

[5] 1 St. John v. 19.

[6] St. James iii. 15.

like a heavy weight upon the soul, wearying and pressing it down, and darkening it. It deludes and beguiles the heart, tries to drown it in material things,[1] preoccupies it with the care of bodily wants, furnishes grounds for avoiding prayer and all those exercises by which the body is reduced to subjection. Thus all order in man is turned upside down, thoughts, affections, actions, all are ill-regulated, and the animal part of man occupies the place in his heart which was intended for God.

If then we intend seriously to labour to make ourselves indifferent, we must remove these three obstacles. We must avoid acting from impulse, and must be guided by reason as intelligent beings. We must in matters of the soul, spurn the arguments of the world and of the flesh, and form a right estimate of things according to the teachings of faith and sound reason. not according to the judgments of the world.[2] We must put a rein on the body and a bridle on our senses, if we mean to be men of reason and servants of God.

We must fight against a diseased imagination, root out false principles, and destroy all attachments condemned by faith and right reason, then, and then only, may we hope to secure that holy indifference which alone can ensure unbroken peace and happiness, and enable us to proceed securely on our way to eternal happiness and our everlasting home.

[1] "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things. (Wisdom ix. 15.)

[2] "But the natural man receiveth not the teaching of the Spirit of God, for it is foolishness to him; and it must needs be beyond his knowledge because the spiritual mind alone can judge thereof." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

THE FOUNDATION. REPETITION.

After having reflected on the Foundation, section by section, it is well to consider it now as a whole and taken together, in order thereby to impress it more deeply on our mind and heart; so that the former may be fully convinced of the great truths it contains, and the latter may be more earnestly attached to them. One section gives force and strength to the other, and all when combined produce the effect of totally undeceiving us, persuading us to form a generous and firm resolution to serve God and to save our souls.

The beginning and the preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As in the preceding meditation.

Prelude 2.—I will pray with my whole heart that God would vouchsafe to make me see and know my last end and what is wanting to me.

First Point.—"Man was created," &c. This is certain—revelation proclaims it, reason declares it, nature and conscience confirm its truth. That God has given me a law of life is equally certain, and rests on the same authority. But what is this law of life? God has endowed me with the faculty of apprehending truth, with the power of wishing and loving good, and with the means of knowing Him and of loving Him. Consequently this must be the law of my life—a law and an end worthy of Himself and ennobling to me, that I should give glory to Him,[1] know Him, pay Him reverence and service here, and possess Him eternally in Heaven.[2]

What motives urge me to fulfil this law?

1. It is an act of justice to serve God. I come from Him, from Him alone, entirely from Him, always from Him. I depend then wholly upon Him. Consequently,

[1] "And every one that calleth upon My Name, I have created him for My glory, I have formed him and made him." (Isaias xliii. 7.)

[2] "Fecit Deus hominem ut summum bonum intelligeret, intelligendo amaret, amando possideret, possidendo frueretur." (Augustine, *De cognitione veræ vitæ.*)

He alone has a claim to everything in and about me; and were I to give myself to any other than Him, I should be guilty of injustice against Him.[1]

2. It is also salutary for me to serve Him. Inasmuch as this service secures true peace here, it is useful in this life; God having ordained that our temporal happiness should depend on the promotion of His glory. Then, as to the next world, by serving God we make sure our eternal felicity.[2]

3. It is necessary that I should serve Him, for by not doing this we incur our eternal perdition; and that through our own deliberate fault, seeing that on His side God has provided us with abundant facilities.[3] If we fail, it is our own negligence that we must blame.

4. It is a glorious thing to serve God.[4] It reflects great honour upon us that we should belong to the household of a monarch. What then must it not be to be engaged in the service of God? The angels and the saints, nay even our Blessed Lady herself had no higher calling to fulfil.

Second Point.—"The other things," &c. Everything outside myself, and also everything within me—my senses, faculties, my relationships and circumstances through life—are all helps provided by God, for this one object alone that they should serve as means, but never as an end. Hence it is criminal to employ them in any different way. While it is an insult to the Master, it is also an injustice and a folly as regards ourselves.

The rule of our selection must be *tantum-quantum*, that is, so far only—no more, no less. Those which really

[1] "It is just to be subject to God, and that a mortal man should not equal himself to God." (2 Mach. ix. 12.)

[2] "That all the children of Israel might see that it is good to obey the holy God." (Ecclus. xlvi. 12.)

[3] "If thou wilt keep the commandments of God and perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee. . . . Before man is life and death, good and evil; stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt." (Ecclus. xv. 16—18.)

[4] "It is great glory to follow the Lord; for length of days shall be received from Him." (Ecclus. xxiii. 38.)

help me to my end must be embraced and used by me, those on the contrary which turn me aside from it must be detested; those again that are indifferent in themselves should be either abstained from or be turned to good. It is often not sufficient to abstain from indifferent things, we must do more, we must repel them, not heeding their comfort, ease, or convenience.

It is wrong and disastrous to be guided by our likes and dislikes, for often our corrupt nature likes what it should dislike, and dislikes what it should like. Keeping then our eyes fixed upon our true end, let us act on the safe principle of the *tantum-quantum*.

Third Point.—" It is therefore," &c.

Here we have the means provided by which we may put the second point in practice, and which contains the highest and most sublime perfection. We live in the midst of creatures, all of which are trying to allure or to repel us, and yet we must resist their attractions and ignore their repulsions by making ourselves practically indifferent in their regard. To how many is this principle to be extended? Not merely to the four classes of things which rule the world, but to all those special objects which in our individual case we have found to be obstacles for us, such as success in studies or occupations, talents, accomplishments; nay even to desolation, aridity, &c., in the supernatural order.

1. That we should do this is just and reasonable. God and the soul are the only two objects to which we should refer all things, which we must prefer to all things, and to which all else must be subservient. Yet we are such poor and blind creatures that we do not know what is good for us.

2. It is useful. It ensures us true peace, serenity, and rest. It cuts us off, as far as possible, from all occasions of sin, and raises us into a region of tranquillity which anxiety and agitation cannot invade.

3. It is necessary, because, ignorant as we are of what will prove a benefit or a detriment to us, we must throw ourselves on the providence of God, to be disposed

of as He pleases. Yet this is impossible, unless we try to make ourselves practically indifferent.

Often then ask yourself the question: What will health avail me if I am to be damned? What harm can delicate health do me hereafter if only my soul is saved? Or what is the good of being rich and honoured on earth, and then spend eternity in shame and wretchedness? What the harm of a life of poverty and obscurity, if that is to lead to my salvation?

Now the means of gaining indifference on these points is to practise the rule which St. Francis Xavier was constantly repeating—*Vince teipsum.*

Our meditations on the Foundation thus far refer to every man as such; that is, as he is an intelligent being, dependent for his existence and the prolongation of his life on the pure and sole goodness of God, the great Creator, Preserver, and Supreme Master of all things. They regard man in the natural order, and the relations, duties, and obligations which obtain between man and his God in that order.

But since man, through the infinite merits of our Blessed Lord, belongs also to the supernatural state, it behoves him further to take into account the far higher relations in which he stands, and the far weightier obligations which press upon him in the supernatural order. Hence we must apply the Foundation to man's present condition.

THE SUPERNATURAL APPLICATION OF THE FOUNDATION.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I place myself before the ever adorable Trinity.

Prelude 2.—I beg earnestly to know my real position and the end proposed to me; and why I am placed in this world in the supernatural order.

First Point.—I contemplate the majesty and glory of the Great God, as He has revealed Himself to me—the Ancient of days[1] seated on His everlasting throne amid the eternal hills, all surrounded with glory. Thousands of spirits adore before Him, and their songs of praise sound louder than the roaring of the mighty ocean, telling forth His infinite perfections, wisdom, truth, power, beauty, goodness, and love. And who am I who thus stand before Him? Alas! if I see myself as I am, I find my body a prey to many miseries, and in regard of my soul, my mind is dim and sluggish, my heart wayward and turned to evil, my will weak and paralyzed, my memory burdened with many sins. The angels are pure spirits, they have the vision of God, and enjoy the bliss of possessing Him, whom they praise, reverence, and serve[2] as their Lord for ever and ever. I ask of holy faith again, Who then am I? And she answers that I am the son of that Mighty Father. By Baptism I have been raised above the earth, and lifted up from the dunghill,[3]

[1] "I observed until thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days did sit. His garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool. His throne was fiery flames, the wheels of it like a burning fire. Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him." (Daniel vii. 9, 10.)

[2] "Thou art worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power: because Thou hast created all things, and for Thy will they were and have been created." (Apoc. iv. 11.)

[3] Psalm cxii. 7.

and must recognize in Him my true Father, and myself His son by adoption, as Jesus is His Son in the fulness of the Divine Nature. Let angels rejoice in being His ministers, it is mine to rejoice in being His son by grace and adoption. But has He proved Himself to be indeed my Father? A father must declare his love to his child—must prove it by making sacrifices, and must provide for his growing years—all this is required of a true parent. Has God done all this for me? Listen to the strange utterances of His love, "With an everlasting love have I loved thee, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee;"[1] "My delight is to be with the children of men;"[2] again, "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee."[3] Strange language this! But what sacrifices has He actually made for me? He did not rest content to make oblation of one of His spirits, but sent His well-beloved Son, subjecting Him to all that is involved in His Incarnation, Passion, and Death, that thereby He might make me partaker of His Divine Nature, heir to His own glory, and might provide a crown, throne, and sceptre for me in Heaven—my true Home. O God! what a title of nobility is mine! What a Father art Thou to me in Heaven! Meantime, what am I to do here on earth? Praise Him! Yes; but with all the eloquence of word and action. Reverence Him! Yes! with all the filial reverence of a child towards a Father of such infinite Majesty; serve Him and spend myself in His service. Yet in doing all this I must be animated by a truly loving and filial spirit.

Second Point.—Again, looking upward with the eye of faith I regard the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, as being equal to the Father in wisdom, power, beauty, knowledge, goodness, and love. He is God of God, Light of Light, and the hosts of Heaven are adoring Him as their Lord and King. Faith bids me recognize in this Glorious and Eternal Being my own very Brother. My God! Can this be so? Yes, for it is written: "Whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made

[1] Jerem. xxxi. 3. [2] Prov. viii. 31. [3] Psalm ii. 7.

conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren."[1]

He spoke the word, and by it all things were made. A second time He spoke when He transubstantiated bread into His Blessed Body. His third creative utterance was on the Cross, when He exclaimed: Woman, behold thy son, and then to the disciple, Behold thy Mother. By the first He unites the creature with the Creator; by the second He superadds the closer bond of grace; by the third He completes the family tie that unites us to Himself, for besides our having the same Father as Himself, He appoints Mary to be our real Mother, thus making us in all respects His true brethren. And what brother ever loved as He does. Has He not shared His inheritance with us, and made us co-heirs with Him? Does He not feed us with His own Flesh and Blood, and is He not ever and everywhere renewing His life for our sakes, to be near us in His mystical Life?

Oh! surely there is no need to tell us that, as He spends Himself for us, we ought to consume ourselves in praising, reverencing, and serving Him; filled with a spirit of devoted love and thus obeying the great commandment of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind."[2] He is my Brother, and my model of brotherly love. Wo to me if I have not the spirit of Jesus, His sweetness and His zeal for His Father's glory, and strong desire to carry out His holy will. Wo to me if whilst professing myself to be His brother, I belie it by my actions.

Third Point.—Again, faith reveals to me another Person in the Godhead—the Holy Spirit, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son; proceeding from them, the outcome of their mutual love. And how am I connected with this Third Divine Person? The Apostle Paul replies, "You are the temple of the Holy Ghost,"[3] and from the Council of Florence we learn that the Fathers explained these words as expressing the direct

[1] Romans viii. 29. [2] St. Matt. xxii. 37. [3] 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19.

indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us,[1] by a kind of mystical personal union. As long as we do not banish Him by sin, He always abides with us, aiding and adorning our souls with fresh gifts and graces, enlightening our minds by frequent inspirations, filling our hearts with holy aspirations, bringing forth in us fresh fruits of His sacred indwelling, and strengthening us in our combats against the world, the flesh, and the devil. What, then, is my duty in return? Ought I not to despise all things of earth, and be perfectly indifferent in regard to each of them, remembering that my heart is a sanctuary consecrated to the Blessed Trinity, and may not be sullied by earthly and carnal desires! It is my plain duty to observe the commandments of God and of His Church, to follow the maxims of the Gospel, to walk worthily in the footsteps of Christ, and not degenerate from the high thoughts of the sons of God.

"Our Father."

REPETITION OF THE FOUNDATION FOR A PRIEST.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I imagine myself in the presence of Jesus, the great High Priest of the Sacrifice.

Prelude 2.—I beg earnestly that I may know my obligations as a priest, and the means I must employ to fulfil them worthily; and may receive grace to put them in practice.

First Point.—What is a priest? He is truly a man of God by the *character* with which he is invested; by the *power* given him, greater than those of the angels, or of our Blessed Lady herself. He is the representative of Jesus Christ, exercising power over His Body, both real and mystical; he represents the Church in the recita-

[1] Bessarion, in the Council of Florence.

tion of the Divine Office; he co-operates with Jesus in the Mass; he is *judge*, *doctor*, and *father* of his people in the supernatural order: and holds in the Mass the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. What dignity can be compared with this! What are all earthly powers, which in truth can only reach and affect the body, whereas those of the priesthood immediately regard the soul? And this dignity and power are conferred on weak and frail man! Truly the words of the Psalmist are verified: "He hath raised up the needy from the earth, and lifted up the poor out of the dunghill that He may place him with princes, with the princes of His people."[1]

Second Point.—How great, then, ought to be my sanctity! My soul and body, my actions, and in fact everything within me should be holy. Assuredly, I ought ever to have in view the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and, as sharing in the spirit of the Incarnation, should embrace the labours, the humiliations, and the Cross of Jesus. I should be dead to the world, to pleasure and honour, and accept patiently, even if I cannot love, contempt, suffering, and sacrifice; I should cherish solitude and recollection, and with the Apostle[2] regard all else but as *stercora*. How pure should be these hands which every day hold and uplift the Most Sacred Flesh of Jesus—how holy that tongue on which He deigns to repose, and on which His Sacred Blood is poured! How pure should be this body, how spotless this mind and heart that are daily made one with the thrice-holy Son of God!

Third Point.—What are the means by which I may fulfil my end?

In the first place, as a priest I must be a man united to God by prayer. My work being supernatural, and affecting the souls of men, must derive all its efficacy from God, and from His holy grace; for the obtaining of these I must pray to Him. By mental prayer I must form and mould my mind and heart after the model set me by Jesus Christ. I must pray with the lips when

[1] Psalm cxii. 7, 8. [2] Philipp. iii. 8.

reciting the Divine Office, doing this with attention, devotion, and reverence; and I must offer up the Holy Mass with great recollection, humility, and love. In administering the sacraments I must unite myself in spirit with Him whom I represent; with Jesus, patient, merciful, and gentle when I am in the sacred tribunal; with Jesus, loving and self-sacrificing when administering Holy Communion; with Jesus, when labouring and going about doing good in visiting the sick, the poor, and the afflicted, &c.

In general, the more I avoid all commerce with the world, except in my official capacity, the closer will be my union with Christ, the greater will be my influence for good over the minds and hearts of others, the more perfectly will I fulfil the end and object of my life.

I must by example as well as by words, preach detachment from all earthly things, and inculcate attachment to God alone and to His holy service. If I neglect to employ these means, will not the world condemn me at the Last Day, and how terrible an account I shall have to render to the justice of God.

REPETITION OF THE FOUNDATION FOR A RELIGIOUS.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves in presence of our Lord, who addresses us in those words: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end, life everlasting."[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us beg, what we must earnestly desire, that our Creator and Lord would enlighten our minds to see the real nature of our vocation, in order that we may duly appreciate its dignity and its excellence, and that

[1] Romans vi. 22.

He would guide and strengthen our wills to regulate our lives accordingly.

First Point.—The character of the religious state.

The religious state binds its members to tend toward perfection through the observance of religious vows and of the rules and constitutions proper to their Institute. The essence of religious life consists in practising the three vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. Indeed the very title of a "Religious" denotes one who is in a special manner consecrated to God, is bound to render Him more particular worship, and consequently renounces all those things which are calculated to withdraw the mind from Divine things and attach it to this world, "in the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."[1] This renunciation is effected by the vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, offered up in some Order whose constitutions and rules are approved and confirmed by the authority of Holy Church.[2]

We see then, that a Religious, in virtue of his state, is bound to tend to perfection, not merely by the observance of the commandments, but also by the fulfilment of the obligations incurred in taking the three religious vows, according to the rules or constitutions of the Order of which he is a member.

By the vow of poverty he voluntarily renounces all personal proprietorship, or "dominion" over any earthly things or possessions.

By his vow of chastity he voluntarily renounces all external acts of luxury, and all deliberate consent to or desire of the same, and that under pain of sacrilege.

By his vow of obedience he voluntarily despoils himself of his own judgment and will, in favour of the judgment and will of Christ our Lord, as notified to him by his Rule or by the Superior canonically appointed to rule over him.

Let us thank God for his infinite love and mercy in calling us to so exalted a state, and in having chosen us

[1] 1 St. John ii. 16. [2] Suarez, *De Rel.* lib. i. c. i. n. 2

out of thousands more fitted and more worthy of such a special grace; and let us pray that we may "see our vocation," highly esteem it, and in all things walk worthy of it.

Second Point.—For what end does a "Religious," in addition to the observance of the commandments common to all Christians, bind himself further to the observance of the Evangelical Counsels, and of the rules of the Institute of his Order?

It is, that thereby he may more securely fulfil the end for which he is created, namely, that he may praise God, reverence Him, and serve Him; and that he may do this more perfectly, being protected by greater safeguards, and assisted by greater graces; and may at the same time pursue his end with ever-increasing constancy and fervour. He praises God in mind and heart by mental and vocal prayer, by the good example which he gives, and by these and other means prescribed in his Institute, he also draws others to join him in this service of praise, according to the admonition of the Psalmist: "Let every spirit praise the Lord."[1] He himself is bound, by the observance of exterior modesty, to show extraordinary reverence towards God, as the Apostle advises: "Let your modesty be known to all men, for the Lord is nigh."[2] And according to his Rule, he must by word and example draw others to manifest a kindred reverence to God. His service of God must be marked by more than ordinary Christian devotedness, nor will the mere observance of the ten commandments suffice. For a Religious to rest content with this, would imply violation of a holocaust, and insincerity before God in his profession, which would seriously imperil his vocation, and lead probably to his forfeiture of the grace of final perseverance.

He who professes complete detachment from riches, and the comforts or conveniences attendant on wealth; from pleasures, even those that in themselves are not forbidden by the law of God; and from the honour and

[1] Psalm cl. 5. [2] Philipp. iv. 5.

praise of men, does not satisfy his obligations by living the life of ordinary good Christians in the world. He is bound to aim higher, he must strive to excel and make marked advance in the praise, reverence, and service of his Master and Lord, as one filled with the spirit of the love of God, to whom he is solemnly consecrated in body and in soul. Alas! how often are we inclined to forget this our engagement! How many of us will find to our confusion, on the great day of the Lord, that notwithstanding all the graces which we have received in the course of our religious life, we have fallen far short of the perfection attained by persons in the world who have not received such graces! How rarely have we earnestly striven to realize in ourselves the ideal of religious perfection! And yet it is for this that Holy Church has consecrated us to God, and has accepted our sacrifice. It is as such that we are regarded by the world; it is on this ground that even our bodies are held sacred. To neglect to aim at this perfection is to sail under false colours, and to play the hypocrite in our daily lives.

Third Point.—What are the means for the attainment of our true end?

(*a*) We must not only live as though practically indifferent to all things created, in the full sense of the words, but must also strip ourselves of their possession as far as is consistent with the letter and spirit of our rules, only making use of them, as far as is necessary for God's glory or service, in the true spirit of poverty.

(*β*) We must renounce all comforts, conveniences, and indulgences that flatter human nature or the animal man, and which in a Religious are hardly consistent with the perfection of the second vow.

(*γ*) We must lay aside our own judgment and will, and assume the will and judgment of Christ our Lord as this is manifested to us, in all the circumstances of our life, by our rules, or by the orders of the Superior whom God has appointed over us. To this we are pledged by our vow of obedience.

(*δ*) In order that we may duly and constantly make

use of these means, we absolutely require the help of God, which can be secured only by prayer. Hence the necessity of that exactness and fidelity in all spiritual duties, which is prescribed by rule, as regards both the time and the manner of performing them. The Religious who fails in the employment of this means, or is negligent in using it, will fail in his vocation, or will lead a negligent and tepid life, whereas he who is faithful to prayer will serve God with fervour. The former will be a stranger to peace of soul and real happiness, and will endanger his vocation; whereas the latter "will run in the way of God's service with a dilated heart."[1]

Let us, with St. Bernard, often put this question to ourselves, *Ad quid venisti?* Why have we entered religious life? Is it not in order to die to all that is not God, to live only to Jesus Christ, to praise Him, reverence Him, and serve Him, not with only ordinary care, but according to the very letter and spirit of our Rule. Or again, with St. Aloysius, let us say, *Quid hoc ad æternitatem?* How does this profit for eternity? How will it advance our everlasting interests? How does it fit in with our vocation here, and our glory hereafter?

In our colloquy we should humble ourselves at the sight of our many infidelities to grace and to our high vocation; we should thank His Divine Majesty for having called us to His special service, and should resolve, with His grace, to labour henceforth more earnestly that we may imbibe the true spirit of our Institute, and fulfil the end proposed to us in our holy calling.

End with the "Our Father."

[1] Psalm cxviii. 32.

CONCERNING SIN.

If we have made the meditations on the Foundation with any fruit, we must be convinced of the necessity of overcoming self, and of rooting out all inordinate affections, that we may make a right use of creatures in the service of God and so secure the salvation of our souls. In order to stimulate the will to make this necessary resolution, St. Ignatius proposes for our consideration the wide-spread disorder caused by the wrong use of creatures, and the dreadful effects resulting from it, as we see in three instances which he mentions—the sin of the angels, the prevarication of our first parents, and lastly, as holy faith teaches, the case of a man who dies after his first mortal sin not repented of.

1. This three-fold consideration the Saint employs in order to strike us with a holy fear of God, to lead us to make an act of sincere sorrow for our many sins, accompanied by true repentance and a lasting change of life.

2. It will enable us to discover the passion or vice that has principally diverted us from the service of God and endangers the forfeiture of our salvation. In the angels this vice was pride; in Adam it was, partially at least, sensuality; in man it may, in addition to these, be avarice, hatred, envy, &c. How, then, with regard to myself? Experience of the past should make me careful for the future, and determine me boldly and without compromise to eradicate my particular sin. In making such acts of sorrow it is well to enter into details, and to express our detestation and abhorrence of whatever has been the root and cause of all the rest.

3. We should also in our acts of contrition include all our venial sins, since from these may often be traced great injury to the soul.

4. In the first part of the Exercises St. Ignatius' object is to excite in us regret for our past sins, in order to prepare us to enter upon an altogether new life. The

three fundamental exercises, namely, the meditation on "The Three Sins," on "Our own Sins," and on the punishment of sin in Hell, concur admirably to this result. By the first we are excited to shame and confusion; by the second, to hatred and abhorrence of all sin; by the third, to a resolution and firm purpose to avoid sin at all costs. To these three emotions must be added sorrow for having offended God, who is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely good to us, that so the sinner may elicit an act of true contrition. Inferior motives of sorrow, such as the vileness of sin, fear of Hell, or of other punishments inflicted by God upon sin, suffice for attrition or imperfect contrition, which, however, is not sufficient to justify the soul without the Sacrament of Penance.[1]

ON THE THREE SINS.

The first case is that of a single sin, without either time or grace for repentance being granted. In the second case, full time and grace were given, but a severe satisfaction was exacted in this life during the space of nine hundred years, followed by three thousand years spent in Limbo. In the third, advantage was not taken either of time or grace, and eternal torments are the result. All three instances set forth the malice of sin. Its malignity is shown by the benefits of which it deprives the sinner, and by the evils which it brings upon him.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I should imagine my soul imprisoned as it were in my body, which is tending to corruption; while both body and soul are consigned to drag on a miserable existence in the midst of the brute creation, alone in the desert and far removed from the haunts of men.

[1] Conc. Trid. s. xiv. c. 4.

Prelude 2.—I will beg the grace of profound shame and confusion at the thought of so many who are lost for a single mortal sin, and of more, for far fewer sins than I have committed. How often have I deserved the same punishment for my many sins.

First Point.—The Sin of the Angels.—God created a mighty host of spirits, and endowed them with wonderful gifts of nature and of grace, designing that, after they had proved their loyalty and faithful service, they should enjoy eternal glory with Him as their reward. For this He endowed them with a keen and powerful intelligence, and with a corresponding faculty of love. Unlike man they had no material bodies to impede or encumber their actions, and they had the power to see clearly and to love intensely the great Ruler of the spirit world. But if they are to merit heavenly glory they must prove their loyalty and fidelity to God their Creator by acknowledging their dependence on Him. One-third of that mighty host refused, and in an instant, without any time for repentance, they were hurled in wild confusion into the abyss of fire enkindled by the breath of an angry God.

Who is it that chastises? The God of infinite *justice*, who cannot punish unduly; of infinite *mercy*, whose punishment never equals the penalty incurred; of infinite *wisdom*, who cannot be mistaken; of infinite *sanctity*, one therefore who cannot punish unreasonably or through passion.

The criminals in this case were angels, noble spirits, most exalted and vast in number! They were thus terribly punished for one single sin, of thought conceived in a moment. The punishment is total ruin; their mind is instantaneously perverted from truth to falsehood; their wills become capable only of hate, they are drowned in a sea of woes, and are throughout eternity deprived of all rest, peace, or comfort.

What must I think, then, of myself, of my own sins in thought, word, and deed, sins so alarming in number, so degrading to my very nature. I remain hitherto

unscathed and overflowing with grace. In each of the angels one sin has brought forth a devil, while all my sins have been as yet but slightly punished.

Colloquy.—My first feeling should then be one of overwhelming shame, my next, that of overpowering gratitude for God's excessive goodness and mercy towards me. I will exclaim with St. Anselm: "Heu peccatum nomen horrendum! res detestabilis, nulli malo comparabilis!" Who can hate it enough? Grant, O my God, that in future I may fly from it with horror, and do Thou fill my soul with shame for all my black ingratitude.

Second Point.—In order to fill up the void left by the rebel angels, God in His love and mercy creates man. He forms out of the dust a body, and breathes into it a soul, and thus creates Adam, endowing him with original justice and sanctifying grace, adding thereto the gift of wisdom, and He then places him in the Garden of Eden. From his side He also forms Eve, to be a companion, a sharer in his bliss, and the mother of all the living. He confers on them the preternatural gift of immunity from sickness, suffering, concupiscence, and death; intending that, after praising, reverencing, and serving Him for a time, they should pass into the eternal enjoyment of Himself in Heaven.

This destiny, however, they must merit by rendering to Him the glory of their free service; and to help them therein God allows them the full use of all the goods of Paradise except that, in order to prove their loyalty and fidelity, they must abstain from the fruit of one tree. Satan, the spirit of envy, hatred, and lying, allures Eve, who in turn induces Adam to take of the fruit forbidden, and thus they commit sin. God banishes them from the Garden, condemns them to nine hundred years of sorrow and misery, and last of all to death and to a long confinement in Limbo. What is the result and the fearful consequence of this sin?

The all-just, all-merciful, all-holy God at once withdraws supernatural life and His preternatural gifts from them, leaving them only their human nature, maimed

and wounded, so to speak, in the blindness of their intellect and hardness of heart, without the power to understand their condition or detest their crime, unless God may please in His mercy and love to grant them fresh grace. Thus Adam and all his posterity are condemned to pains, infirmities, sickness, and death of the body, to corruption, ignorance, rebellion of the passions and appetites of the soul, repugnance to good, inclination to evil. From this sin we trace all the calamities, public and private, which for sixty centuries have afflicted humanity; the curse of God like a miasma is spread over all nature, impregnating the very earth and the waters of the sea; and it endures even now unchanged.

Consider, besides, the terrible history of humanity ever since; in spite of the death of Jesus Christ, it records the eternal perdition of so many unfortunate men and women carried down into the abyss by the miserable tendencies of all to evil, from the time of the Fall.

And how does this affect myself? Adam committed but one sin—and how many have mine been! He had no experience of God's justice; while I am surrounded by countless examples of it, and feel their truth within myself. He was punished at once, but I am spared as yet, nay, even innumerable graces are ever being heaped upon me. Indeed, were it not for these, I should have been carried along like so many thousands from sin to sin, until absorbed in the abyss of everlasting perdition.

Alas! into what disgrace have I not fallen! In sin I was born, but Thou, my God, didst cleanse me; yet I soiled myself with it still more, and that with full deliberation! Alas! what fearful punishments must await me unless I repent at once. *Parce, Domine. Parce servo tuo.*

Third Point.—Let me imagine a soul cut off after its first mortal sin. Perhaps it had acquired previous merits by corresponding with grace—it was beloved by God, was His adopted child, &c. And now? For one sin it is consigned to hopeless and eternal punishment!

What must be the terrible nature of a sin, which breaks asunder the bond uniting such a God and Father with His child whom He so much loved! It is the violation of all the rights of God, and of all His claims as a Father; it is a foul contempt of Him, a rejection of His infinite goodness. How vile a thing then must I not appear before God and His angels, having my poor soul so grievously weighed down with sin! How I ought to tremble in His sacred presence!

Colloquy.—I will fling myself in spirit at His feet, as He hung for me on the Cross, and tell Him humbly that I owe it all to Him that I am not lost, and this through the many wounds He has received for me. For me He became Man, a very slave, a Man of Sorrows. He bore my iniquities, and for me was condemned to so cruel a death. And yet what return have I made? Alas! to my shame and confusion; what have I not done against Him? I have despised His love, frustrated His designs, treated Him as my enemy, and actually squandered His Blood.

Ah! what shall I do in future! Oh! may Jesus grant me the grace of repentance and a firm resolution to make amends for my ingratitude.

End with the "Our Father."

The motives proposed in this meditation are calculated to inspire shame, confusion, fear, and horror for sin, and thus a state of attrition; but in the colloquy St. Ignatius puts before us the reflection which is calculated to excite true contrition, namely, the infinite goodness of God crucified by our sins.

In the following meditation he proposes a consideration of the number, deformity, and malice of our own sins, and how we must appear in God's sight. These thoughts should fill us with intense sorrow and shame, and should force from us internal tears at least, if they do not betray themselves externally; and besides this with great self-contempt, according as we get a deeper

knowledge of ourselves. By going deep down into ourselves we learn to know and despise ourselves, and self-contempt drives us nearer to God and stimulates us to unite ourselves more closely with Him, which is the true work of perfection. Along with St. Augustine let us, after this meditation, often pray: *Domine noverim me! ut oderim me; noverim te, ut diligam te!*—"O Lord, let me know myself, that I may hate myself; but let me know Thee, that so I may love Thee."

ON OUR OWN SINS.

Commencement and preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I will picture to myself my soul confined as in a prison-house, in this my body of corruption, and myself amidst the brute creation in this valley of tears; devoured by inordinate affections like so many foul reptiles.

Prelude 2.—I will beg a profound and intense sorrow for my many and great sins.

First Point.—Let me pass in review, though with fewer details than would be requisite if preparing for confession, my many sins of omission and commission, in thought, word, or deed, during my past life: in my youth, as far as manhood, and up to the present time. Let me review the places in which I have lived, the employments or offices I have held, and my relations with others, whether inferiors, equals, or superiors. I will ask myself when and where I committed my first sin; what was its nature; what passion predominated and dragged me into frequent sins; and how many they were in number. But, perchance, I drew others also into sin, becoming thus responsible for their offences and crimes—whether impurity, injustice, anger, disobedience to lawful authority, neglect of religion, uncharitableness, &c.; violations of the commandments of God and of His Holy Church;

abuse or neglect of the sacraments; sins of scandal, and of co-operation in the sins of others.

Moreover, we ought to recall not only our mortal sins, but also some of our venial sins as well; for although these do not make us enemies of God, they are no less acts of disobedience towards Him whom we are bound to serve as our last end.

Alas! how truly may I say, "My iniquities are multiplied above the hairs on my head."[1] "Who will give a fountain of tears to my eyes?"[2]

Second Point.—Consider the deformity and malice there is in every mortal sin, even if we abstract from its being forbidden. In the first place, it is unreasonable, for in it man follows his appetites against his own judgment, thus lowering himself to the level of the brute creation,[3] as in the indulgence of his anger, intemperance, lust, &c.; nay, below the animal creation, which is content to satisfy its natural instinct. Again, the sinner, instead of ruling his evil inclinations, sells himself to be their slave.[4] How great an infamy! As our own conscience confessed, when after first sinning we were seized with fear, we concealed our act, and tried to stifle the reproaches of our guilty conscience.

Third Point.—And who am I, who have thus offended God Himself? If I compare myself with merely those of my own household or community, as to natural gifts and accomplishments; as to intellect, knowledge, disposition, or character; or as to supernatural gifts, how small I am beside them. If I further consider those persons and compare them in all these respects with the rest of mankind, in respect of knowledge, virtue, power, &c., I am but an atom.[5] What then must I be in comparison with the angelic world, and finally, with the great

[1] Psalm xxxix. 13. [2] Jerem. ix. 1.

[3] "And man when he was in honour did not understand: he is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them." (Psalm xlviii. 13.)

[4] "Amen, amen, I say to you, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." (St. John viii. 34.)

[5] "All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing and vanity." (Isaias xl. 17.)

God? My less than nothingness overwhelms me! My body is a hot-bed of corruption, my senses overflow with the putrefaction of sin, my soul is a reservoir of putrid sores, my whole self an abyss of perversity and malice.[1]

O Lord, my substance is as nothing before Thee.[2] I am but a worm[3] and rottenness and a son of perdition.

Fourth Point.—Then as to God whom I have offended! Let me compare His infinite perfections[4] with my defects; His virtues with each opposite vice in me; His wisdom with my ignorance; His power with my weakness; His sanctity and justice with my guiltiness; His goodness and love with my mean selfishness. Woe is me! Against whom have I sinned? I have dishonoured God—sinner that I am. I have wickedly and ungratefully spent my days in insulting Him—I, less than the dust, have outraged His Infinite Majesty.

Fifth Point.—By my sins I have given all nature the right to revolt against me. The very brute creation is entitled to reproach me. Angels of Heaven, unless withheld, should have hastened to avenge their outraged Lord; the sun should have refused to shine on me; the earth should have opened its mouth to swallow me, and avenge its Creator. When Semei insulted David, the faithful Abisai cried out: *Quis est iste canis mortuus . . . ibo et amputabo caput ejus.* And his indignation

[1] In the natural order I may consider what I am in regard of my body and its senses, in regard of my intellect and moral sense, then again what I am in all these respects, both socially, and in relation to others. In the supernatural order I may recall the graces I have received, comparing these also with those received by others, and from this two-fold reflection I shall be overwhelmed with even greater shame, confusion, and horror.

[2] Psalm xxxviii. 6.

[3] Job xxv. 6.

[4] St. Ignatius proposes only four of the Divine Perfections which God shares with us, and which we forfeit by sin—that *Wisdom* by which He ordains that He Himself should be the end of all things, everything else being means whereby, according to its nature, it may conduce to this end; —that *Power*, which He manifests in the creation and preservation of all creatures; —that *Goodness* in which He has provided so generously for the benefit of all, in the natural order, and of man in the supernatural order also; and lastly, that *Sanctity* and justice, which mark His infinite aversion to evil and infinite attachment to good.

was certainly most legitimate. How is it then that no angel in Heaven has dealt so with me? As we read that St. Francis Borgia, on the occasion of his meeting some oxen, wondered how it was that they did not gore him to death, and how the workmen did not strike him on the head with their mallets.

I must in my colloquy thank God for His mercy in having spared me, and I must "confess to Him . . . for that He has rescued me from the lower Hell." I must show my gratitude to the angels, for that, when looking on me, they withheld themselves from cutting me off in my sins. I must pour forth my thankfulness to God, who has not only spared me, but has actually never ceased to heap coals of fire upon my head by constantly filling my soul with fresh and ever-increasing graces. I will again offer up acts of pure and heartfelt contrition, and end with the "Our Father."

REPETITION ON THE THREE SINS.

1. After making the two preceding meditations, it is well to select one or two of our more serious sins, which we should recall often during the course of the exercises of the First Week, that we may root them, and the causes of them, out of our hearts, and excite ourselves to supplant them by the opposite virtues.

2. Many advantages are to be found in these repetitions both as regards the understanding and the will. For often in first considering a subject, the intellect may be taken up by its novelty and other circumstances regarding it, so as to overlook its importance and its practical bearing upon oneself, and thus it fails to affect the will. Again, we often experience either great aridity or else spiritual consolation, and it is well to revert to these thoughts, since in both cases, especially in the former, some important point must suggest itself which has

escaped our notice, or which the malice of our spiritual enemy has wished to conceal from us.

3. To this end St. Ignatius prescribes three colloquies for our use: one to our Blessed Lady, beseeching her to intercede for us with her Ever-Blessed Son; a second to Jesus Christ in His capacity of Mediator and Advocate for us with the Eternal Father; and a third to our Heavenly Father Himself, that He would vouchsafe to hear our poor prayers in union with those of Jesus and Mary, and to grant us the grace which we ask.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As in the preceding meditation.

Prelude 2.—We will beg intense shame and confusion, seeing how often we have abused God's mercy and deserved eternal punishment; and secondly, the gift of intense sorrow and penitent tears, poured forth from a contrite and humble heart, which God will not despise.

First Point.—God created the angels to serve Him for a short time, and then to possess Him eternally. Many refused through pride, and were hurled down into Hell, in punishment of a single sin of thought, not one of them being excepted. And I, a man, after so many sins, so often forgiven—sins of thought, word, and deed, and often of so degrading a character, have been spared! How great room here for shame and confusion, and for acts of heartfelt sorrow.

Second Point.—Again, God creates Adam and Eve, and places them in honour, enriched with so many gifts above the requirements of their nature, gifts both supernatural and preternatural, with the design of assuming them into Heaven after their short time of trial. Yet they break the easy command He laid upon them, and so they and their posterity are punished, alas! how fearfully; their punishment being as universal and as terrible now as when first inflicted, and certain to continue so until the last man shall be born. Let us apply this truth to ourselves. Born in sin, we live as exiles in a valley of tears, in which sin is added to sin,

even in the sight of our Saviour crucified for us; nay, we refuse to do penance and we hold up our sinful heads without any shame. How great our need of fear, and shame, and confusion when we look in upon ourselves and contemplate our infamy.

Third Point.—Once more, we see in the torments of Hell the havoc of a single mortal sin still unrepented of. How terrible a thing to fall under the condemnation of the all-just God. And perhaps we have exposed ourselves to this for months, may be for years, as though trying to weary out His mercy and His love.

End with the triple colloquy,[1] in which we beg of our Blessed Lady that she would obtain for us a real internal knowledge and detestation of our sins; a deep feeling of the irregularity and depravity of our life, that we may amend and order it rightly; and lastly, a knowledge of the world, so that we may, out of abhorrence for it, reject all vain and worldly allurements and pursuits. We then make the same request of our Blessed Lord, and say the *Anima Christi*. Lastly, we humbly implore the same of the Eternal Father, through the merits of our Lady, and through the merits of the Passion and Death of our Lord. Conclude with the "Our Father."

[1] In this triple colloquy we beg for three things: (*a*) knowledge and detestation of sin, (*b*) a clear insight into the irregularity of our past life, (*c*) and lastly, a perception of what the world really is. Why so? Because the influence of the example and maxims of the world forms our greatest danger, and the chief cause of our sins; while our want of reflection on the malice of sin betrays us into easily committing it.

REPETITION ON OUR OWN SINS.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—As in the last meditation.

Prelude 2.—We beg earnestly intense sorrow for our many sins, and tears of perfect compunction for having so fearfully offended our good God.

First Point.—Let us pass in review the long list of our sins, committed in the places where we have lived, with the companions whom we have known in the past, in the offices and occupations we have held during our youth, manhood, &c. Sins of thought, word, action, and omission, sins of scandal, &c.[1]

We will then with profound sincerity say the *Confiteor*.

Second Point.—Even if our sins did not involve a violation of any commandment of God, yet they are hideous and malicious, inasmuch as they are against reason, and degrade us to the animal creation, whose law is their appetites; they render us slaves to our passions, and would discredit us before our fellow-men, if they knew our guilt.

Third Point.—By comparing ourselves with all mankind, and all men with one single angel, and that one angel with all the spirits in Heaven, we see that we ourselves are but a shadow when compared with God. If we consider further our defects and miseries, together with all our omissions, truly we shall be overwhelmed with the sense of our worse than nothingness, and our utter unfitness to mingle in respectable society.

Fourth Point.—On the other hand, what is God in Himself? His wisdom, power, holiness, goodness, and

[1] Sins in regard of spiritual duties, either performing them badly or omitting them, sins against the vows, or negligence in their observance, violation of rules of modesty, sins in the discharge of our office, in our conversation, in over-great care of the body, and too little of the soul. If we are priests or Religious, such sins are the more grievous, seeing that we are supposed to be *orationi intenti, mundo et vitiis mortui*.

beauty! If the moral estimate of crime is to be measured by the dignity of the person offended, and by the vileness of the offender, and also by the obligations of the latter to the former, my good God, what a monster of vice and ingratitude I must be in Thy sight! Thou the infinite and absolute Lord, and I poor, and finite, and dependent upon Thee in all things.

Fifth Point.—Well may we cry out with wonder, that sky and air, earth and sea, men and angels, have not demanded vengeance upon us, and have not conspired to torture and destroy us.

Again we will conclude with the triple colloquy to our Lady, our Lord, and to our Heavenly Father, for grace to recognize and abhor each and all our past sins, to feel intimately the sad disorder of our past life, and to be convinced of the wretchedness of this world, that we may disown and despise it, together with its false principles, pernicious seductions, and bad examples. End with the "Our Father."

THE TERRIBLE EFFECTS OF MORTAL SIN.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Picture the soul as a once beautiful child, but now covered over and eaten up by most loathsome and gangrenous ulcers.

Prelude 2.—Beg for great shame and confusion at seeing your deformity and misery, and the pitiful state to which sin has reduced your soul.

First Point.—Let us contemplate how sin deforms the soul, far more than foul and sickening cancers could deform the body, so that were it possible to behold it in a mirror, we should be overpowered with horror, not only because of the vileness which is proper and essential to the act of sin, by robbing it of all its symmetry, but also because when it enters the soul it expels all sanctifying grace and supernatural beauty, and makes it loathsome

in the sight of God and of His angels.[1] If the effect of a sin were to be to change our complexion from white to black, who would commit it, and if already guilty of it would he not at once hasten to repent and seek forgiveness? And though the defacement of the soul is far worse; yet men are not ashamed to live with this disfigurement, notwithstanding that the saints, and angels, and God Himself see it, and are filled with loathing and disgust at the sight.

Second Point.—The grace of God invests the soul with exalted and supernatural dignity, and renders it in His eyes more sublime, more noble and precious than are all earthly monarchs or angels, when considered only according to their natural excellence. He is full of love and admiration of it. But no sooner is this grace forfeited than His love gives place to hatred, and if repentance does not win it back again, He will show no more compassion for that soul than I should have for a viper which had tried to sting me fatally. For the more ennobled and beautiful it was before, so much the more has sin now rendered it vile and loathsome. To outward observance the man may appear honourable, noble, and blessed of God, but in reality he is only a whited sepulchre, full of worms and corruption.[2]

Third Point.—By the friendship of God we, in a manner, become sharers of His attributes and riches, *in re et in spe*. If the friendship of man is a source of real happiness, who shall measure the intensity of joy which fills the soul in experiencing the friendship of God? And if the keenest of heart-wounds is inflicted by the loss of a friend, what human intellect can conceive the fearful wound caused by sin when it robs the soul of its friendship with God; and, what is far worse, changes that friendship into hatred. Again, the deepest and bitterest of all is the enmity which exists between those whose love ought to be the greatest, as between parent and child, brothers and sisters, husband and wife. How deep then and bitter must be the enmity between God

[1] Jerem. iv. 1, 8. [2] St. Matt. xxiii. 27.

and man which is produced by sin. And what can equal the torture of feeling that we have made God our enemy, and have covered ourselves with disgrace before Him! This thought might well work madness in the brain. What darker or more fearful conviction could possess and sadden the mind of man than the consciousness that throughout the course of his life he is an object of loathing to His Father in Heaven!

Fourth Point.—As long as I am in the state of grace I possess a right to the Kingdom of Heaven. I have it on the title of justice, and God has bound Himself to bestow it on me, nor can either the devil or the whole world rob me of it; for I am a co-heir with Jesus Christ. But yet the moment I sin my title-deeds are wholly forfeited.[1] It is not merchandize that I lose, nor an earthly estate, nor even a whole country, but a Heavenly Kingdom and Eternal Glory. If a man is deprived of great worldly goods what sadness and despair often takes hold of him. No expression of sympathy or kindly act can give him relief. Yet, after all, the loss of every earthly possession, which at the best is so very uncertain and short-lived, cannot be so grievous when compared with the eternal loss of Heaven. But the most terrible effect of all is, that the sinner is generally far too blind to realize this loss, or else tries to drown his feelings by plunging into fresh excesses in his desperation, or by giving himself up to a life of dissipation, thus ensuring to himself still greater misery and wretchedness.

Fifth Point.—Finally, the sinner exposes himself at every moment to the risk of falling into Hell, an abyss over which he hangs suspended by the thin and brittle thread of life. Of those we may say with Deuteronomy,[2] "They are a nation without counsel and without prudence. Oh, that they would be wise and understand, and would provide for their last end." What folly it is to run so fearful a risk for the sake of a momentary satisfaction, which too often causes the keenest shame and most bitter sense of self-degradation. May God forgive this infatuation!

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. [2] Deut. xxxii. 28, 29.

In the colloquy let us express our fear, confusion, and sorrow, as well as our gratitude to so good a God for all His past long-suffering patience with us.

End with the "Our Father."

In the application which we made of the Foundation to the Christian soul: to man, as he is raised through the merciful love of God to the supernatural order by the merits of the Life, Passion, and Death of Jesus Christ; we saw that he has thus been established in a higher and closer relationship with God, whereby he is made the son of the Father by adoption, the brother of His only Son by grace, and the living temple of the Holy Spirit, from this new relationship it follows that he has incurred the heavier obligation of loving the Lord his God with his whole mind, heart, soul and strength, and that his praise, reverence, and service must be rooted in and animated by this spirit. For the same reason it was that when Jesus was asked by a doctor of the law tempting Him,[1] "Master, which is the great commandment of the Law?" He replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind: this is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets." It is not enough for us to praise, reverence, and serve God *in any way*, but it is requisite that this praise, reverence, and service should be founded in love, and be such as a child pays to a father, or to a well-beloved brother, or to a guest. Hence in such a one sin has a peculiar and special criminality.

[1] St. Matt. xxii.

SIN IN A CHRISTIAN SOUL.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I place myself humbly in the presence of the Three Divine Persons of the ever-adorable Trinity, before whom the angels are bent in adoration.

Prelude 2.—I beg that I may know the height, depth, and breadth of the malice, baseness, and ingratitude of my sins.

First Point.—After reflecting on the infinite majesty, power, riches, and beauty of the Eternal Father, I consider and dwell on the awful truth of His having adopted me by a real adoption to be His child, to be His heir and co-heir with Jesus Christ. "Raising me up from the earth, and lifting me from the dunghill to place me with the princes of His people."[1]

Oh, how great this love! what sacrifices has it not entailed! and all this for one so mean, so unworthy of being loved, and who Jesus well knew would prove so heedless and so ungrateful. Love like this He never showed or even felt towards His angels. Nay, as a fond Father He has assigned one of them to be my constant guardian and attendant. And all that He desires from me in return is that I should treat Him as being indeed my Father![2] He could not ask less. What child can help praising, reverencing, and serving his parent? Love forces him to do this, and not to do it must cause the child pain. Yet what is any earthly parent when compared with our true Father who is in Heaven. An unnatural child inspires us with horror. What horror then must I inspire in all holy souls, when by committing sins I prove so fearfully unnatural to my Heavenly Father. I fancy I hear Him saying to His angels, "I have brought up this My child and have exalted him, and see how he hath despised Me."[3] Or

[1] Psalm cxii. 7. [2] Malach. i. 6. [3] Isaias i. 2.

again, "Be astonished ye gates of Heaven, and be ye very desolate."[1] Alas! what pain and shame I have inflicted, not only by mortal sin, but by a deliberate venial sin, on a loving Father's heart. It were bad enough for an enemy or a stranger thus to offend and outrage Him, what then for His favoured child to treat Him so! Is it not in a certain sense true, that venial sin in His child strikes a more painful blow at Him than would a mortal sin in one less favoured? And to be guilty like this for so trifling and fleeting a pleasure or satisfaction! Surely that a child of God can sin is terrible. It furnishes the devils in Hell with a malignant gratification, and over the angels in Heaven it casts a gloom.

Second Point.—If I consider the Son of God, He too is infinite as His Father. He is equally the object of the love and adoration of the blessed spirits who pay Him homage and reverence as their Lord and King. I too belong to that holy family, having the same Father and Mother as He. I am not merely an acquaintance, nor a friend, but He Himself has called and made me His brother. He has taken Human Flesh for my sake, has starved and worked for me. He suffered and bled and died for me—and nothing can satisfy His love but I should feed upon His own Flesh and Blood, that angels may not touch but must adore. He has prepared a place for me, that I may be happy along with Him for all eternity. Oh! could I properly and fully realize this truth, I should die of joy! I could not live. And all this love, and all this spending of Himself for my benefit, was in behalf of a poor unworthy beggar like myself upon His mercy. What judgment am I then to pass upon myself if ever I commit one mortal sin? By it I crucify Him again, and make a mockery of His death. I recklessly spill His Most Precious Blood, I turn from a Brother's love and make common cause with the devils against Him, and furnish them with a fresh occasion of blaspheming and taunting Him. If an enemy had done this, He could have borne it,[2] but to be treated thus by a favoured brother! Alas!

[1] Jerem. ii. 12. [2] Psalm liv. 13.

who, if he had a spark of faith or of right feeling, could ever be guilty of such ingratitude as to commit, I do not say a mortal sin, but even a deliberate venial sin? Who can bear the thought of so treating one who deserves our whole love and the love of all mankind? Our indignation would be greatly stirred were we to see an enemy thus treated. A faithful dog will fly to the defence of him who feeds it, whereas I care nothing for one who has done all that a God can do for me, if He steps in between me and my indulgences, even such as are degrading and unworthy. Truly sin in the Christian is a fearful crime against our Divine Elder Brother, the first-born of many brethren.[1]

Third Point.—But the malice of the Christian's sin does not end here. It is directed against the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit of Love, the Comforter, the teacher of all truth—He who in His Divine Person consents to dwell in these very bodies of ours, and is always helping to beautify our souls, that they may be a more worthy dwelling-place for the Deity, and imparting to us an increase of His seven-fold gifts. In His love for us He is content to reside within the poor dwelling of our narrow and fickle hearts. But how do I treat this Divine Guest when I consent to mortal sin? I banish Him from my soul and along with Him His holy gifts and graces. I deface His temple,[2] and on its ruin I place the enemy of God and of my soul;[3] then all my beauty disappears, and what was once like a fair city full of holy spirits adoring their Lord, is become a deserted solitude. With desolation is my soul made desolate through my thoughtlessness. How can I look up towards Heaven which I have so insulted and despised! How can I address my God whom I have so outraged! Who will give fountains of tears to my eyes, that I may by them wash away my iniquities!

Make a fervent triple colloquy, as in the preceding meditations, and end with the "Our Father."

[1] Romans viii. 29. [2] Psalm lxxviii. 1. [3] 1 St. John iii. 10.

ON VENIAL SINS.

There are two kinds of venial sin. One kind comprises such as are committed out of negligence or weakness, or with only partial advertence and without full deliberation. From these even the most perfect are not exempted for any length of time. The other consists of faults committed with full deliberation and consent, and of set purpose. These, by the help of Divine grace, all can avoid, and many saints have in fact avoided them for many years of their lives. It is to these latter that we now refer.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—I imagine my soul heavy, unnerved, and weakened by disease.

Prelude 2.—I will beg an intimate knowledge of the meanness of venial sin, a sincere sorrow for my many faults, and grace to make a firm resolution to avoid them for the time to come.

First Point.—The punishment of venial sin proves its malice. For God visits it with Purgatory; in which, according to some of the Fathers[1] and theologians,[2] the fires are of the same nature with those of Hell except for their duration, while the soul suffers also the anguish of separation from God. It is agitated violently by two conflicting influences which torture it far more acutely than would be the case with a man whose body was being rent in twain by opposite forces; inasmuch as the soul's pain is greater than mere pain of body. The soul knows its God, His beauty, goodness, and love, and consequently has an intense desire to be with Him and to possess Him; and on the other hand it sees its own meanness, ingratitude, and injustice in regard to Him,

[1] Augustine, Gregory the Great, &c.
[2] Suarez, Bellarmine, &c.

and is therefore filled with an intense desire to punish itself and thus vindicate His honour and glory by due expiation. The intensity of this desire constitutes the worst pain of Purgatory, and renders that state far more terrible than all the pains which could be endured or conceived of in this life. We must remember, too, that it is inflicted by a loving God upon those who are His beloved children and are destined to live with Him for all eternity.

We can thus judge of the malice of a venial sin, and its exceeding heinousness when a God of infinite love and justice is bound to punish it so severely in His own most beloved spouses. How great our folly to consent to venial faults, knowing that if unrepented of they may consign us for hours, or months, or years to unconsuming fire, and to the agonizing worm of conscience, which will give us no rest.

Again, God often punishes venial sins in this life by bodily pains and infirmities, and sometimes by spiritual afflictions such as temptations, anxieties, and troubles of conscience, desolation, darkness, aridity, withdrawal of His sensible presence; and worst of all by withholding His superabundant gifts and graces, thus exposing us to greater difficulty in rendering Him due service, and to the danger of failing in it, as the Wise Man warns us, "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."[1]

Second Point.—How great is the intrinsic malice of venial sin!

1. It is a stain, disorder, and serious defilement of the soul, inasmuch as it is opposed to right reason and the teaching of holy Faith.

2. It is an offence, an injury, and a slight offered to God, as it refuses obedience to His holy will and is a violation of His commands. What would the world say of a son who regulated his love and service to his father simply by the determination never to run the risk of being disinherited, but cared little how else he might

[1] Ecclus. xix. 1.

sadden or displease him? Such is the action of the venial sinner towards his loving and Heavenly Father.

3. Each venial sin is an offence committed by a mere man against the Great God. And consequently, mortal sin excepted, it is the most grievous evil which can befall us in this world; and is a greater calamity than the endurance of the pains of Hell or even the loss of Heaven itself. Oh! with what horror should we not then fly from venial sin, and how bitterly should we repent our many sins!

Third Point.—Venial sin inclines the soul towards mortal sin. For, as bodily maladies cause faintness and debility, so venial sin causes great lassitude in the practice of virtue and of resistance to temptation; it brings on weariness and languor in spiritual duties; it induces sloth in our spiritual progress, and a tendency to seek bodily comforts. It, moreover, exposes us to the danger of spiritual death by hardening the conscience, and habituating us to faults, wherein we fall by degrees into habitual venial sin. The committing of venial sins diminishes our fear of them, and makes us less anxious to avoid their occasions, so that we lay aside the virtuous habits which are opposed to them. This carelessness on our part gradually obliges God to diminish His graces, and thus prepares the way for our falling when a more than ordinary temptation assails us. Wherefore, as St. Chrysostom says, we ought in one sense to dread venial sin more than mortal, because it introduces us into a state which is more dangerous and more treacherous.

Let us in our colloquy implore forgiveness of our many sins, offences, and negligences, beg a salutary and holy horror of them, and the grace to avoid all the occasions which may expose us to the danger of committing them. Let us then end with the "Our Father."

REPETITION OF MEDITATION ON VENIAL SINS.

This may be made with great fruit, especially by those who through the mercy of God are preserved from mortal sin, and are living in His habitual service, but yet from time to time fall into deliberate venial sin, if we take the same points as St. Ignatius lays down in the meditation on "Our own Sins."

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—We may picture to ourselves our soul as in a decline, weak and incapable of making a step forward for our own salvation.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg light, courage, and confidence to overcome ourselves, and intense sorrow for our many venial sins.

First Point.—Pass in review your life since your conversion, together with the places and the occupations in which it has been spent. What a mass of faults—vainglory, uncharitableness, self-conceit in your *thoughts;* in your *words* falsehood, exaggeration, detraction, worldliness, &c.; sins of *deed* as regards yourselves, or others, or God Himself; of *omission* in respect to your spiritual duties and to the duties of your state of life, besides the scandal and bad example you have given to others, &c. With shame then must you make your confession of these sins to God and His angels.

Second Point.—Let us next see the malice of them, even if they were not forbidden at all; for example, the disgrace of telling lies, which if detected would make us blush; the cowardice also and meanness of backbiting and detraction, the contemptibleness of vanity and vainglory, the hypocrisy of striving to appear wiser and better than we are, the sacrifice of others to our own selfishness, our coolness and indifference to all spiritual things and to the duties of religion. Oh, how gross and unworthy

do all these faults appear, especially when we find them in a child of God. In a worldling one can notice them without a shudder, but how black and repugnant they are in one who is in the state of grace, and from whom consequently we with reason expect so much greater perfection.

Third Point.—In God our Father it is all so different. He is the direct contrast to all these. He is the truth, He is charity and love, He is forgetfulness of self and He makes sacrifice of all through love for us: *Misericors et miseratur et justus*,[1] the thrice Holy One.

Fourth Point.—Seeing that the ethical malice of sin is to be estimated chiefly by the distance between the offender and the person offended, and secondly by the claims possessed by Him who suffers the offence over him by whom it is given, we ask, Who can conceive the malice of a venial sin? For we are separated from God by an infinite gulf, and His claims upon us are likewise infinite, comprising creation, conservation, justification, adoption into His family, and a share with us in His own inheritance. What then should be our horror of venial sin? And all the greater ought this to be in the case of a sin which is so treacherous, and presents itself to us under so deceptive an appearance.

Fifth Point.—We may well wonder how God has borne with us, how His angels have had patience with us, how the whole of creation has tolerated us, seeing that we have thus basely and ignominiously treated their Creator. What a humiliating thought it is that the animals which we feed and which are so submissive to us have never failed to do God's will, whereas we ourselves are so guilty.

In our colloquy let us pour out our souls in shame and sorrow for our many venial sins, faults, and negligences, and let us beg of God to confirm us in this our resolution to lose everything, even life itself, rather than commit another deliberate venial sin.

End with the "Our Father."

[1] Psalm cxiv. 5.

ON TEPIDITY.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves before God and His angels, overwhelmed with confusion at our many sins, whilst He addresses us in the words of the Apocalypse,[1] "Because thou art tepid, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth."

Prelude 2.—Let us beg light and grace to apprehend fully the miseries of a state of tepidity, and let us with renewed fervour resolve effectually to reform our lives.

First Point.—The characteristics of a tepid soul.—(1) It carries unwillingly the yoke of Christ, and does all its actions in a dull routine. (2) It seeks to avoid all that involves sacrifice, effort, or labour, and studies its own self-ease and comfort; it looks only for human and earthly consolations, and does not hold its affections in sufficient control. (3) It induces us to shorten our spiritual duties, or omit them altogether, and to waste time in light or useless reading. (4) It leads us to think only of self and to ignore others; to indulge at one time in excess of joy, and at another in a profound melancholy. (5) Finally, the tepid man acts from mere natural motives, speaks without discretion, reads and meditates without fruit, confesses without resolution, and communicates without faith or fervour; he contents himself with a moderate degree of virtue, and fosters endless habits of venial sin.

The result of all this is that he sets but little value on heavenly things, and derives very small comfort from them. Yet he dare not give himself up to the full enjoyment of earthly gratification, being made restless and uneasy by the violence of his rebellious passions. Thus he denies himself all that true consolation, peace, and joy which are the reward only of a fervent soul. He is

[1] Apoc. iii. 16.

like the wine-bibber spoken of in Proverbs xxiii. 30—32, or shares in the curse pronounced on the barren fig-tree, in St. Matt. xxi. 19, 20.

Second Point. — Dangers of Tepidity.—(1) The tepid man dwells on the little good, but turns away from the much evil which he does. (2) He is like a man under an attack of slow fever, which is so hard to cure that in point of fact many grievous sinners are converted, for one who is in a state of tepidity. The latter gradually loses his horror of mortal sin, begins to tamper with his temptations, ceases to be alarmed at the free indulgence of his senses and natural affections, and is by them more and more propelled towards mortal sin. This tendency places him in the downward course of reprobation, incurs the anger of God, and causes sadness to the Sacred Heart.

Third Point.—Tepidity generally begins with (1) the omission of or negligence in spiritual duties, (2) contempt for little things, (3) absence of any guard over the beginning of faults, or check upon the course of our natural affections.

In our colloquy let us beg pardon for these past abuses of grace and for so much remissness in God's service. End with the "Our Father."

ON HELL.

1. After the meditations on Sin, St. Ignatius in his Book of the Exercises places the contemplation of Hell. It may be asked why he does not treat of the "last things" in their usual order?

First, he assigns the four meditations on Sin and this one on Hell to the First Week, as being sufficient, if well made, to secure the end proposed, namely, a deep feeling of shame and sorrow for the sins committed, with a firm resolution to sin no more; accompanied by the determined rejection of all inordinate affections. It is true

that he does not exclude by name the meditations on Death, or on the Particular and General Judgments: but these must be made after those on Sin and on Hell.[1]

The *Directorium* also adds that other meditations on Hell besides the one in the Exercises may be selected.

Secondly, St. Ignatius desires us to conceive a great horror and sorrow for sin, and to attain this end no meditation is so well fitted as that on the fear of punishment, if motives of love and gratitude towards God have hitherto failed to change the heart.

Thirdly, when we consider that the sinner does actually by his sin *ipso facto* incur the punishment of Hell, and like a malefactor is already sentenced to the same, the more natural order is that this exercise should immediately follow those on sin.

The soul being filled with horror, shame, and confusion at the sight of its sins, finds itself on the verge of eternal misery, and is filled with terror lest it fall into the hands of the living God, so that it resolves to abandon its sins altogether, and at once. The other meditations adapted to the First Week may be made with advantage afterwards, in order to confirm and strengthen the good disposition of the exercitant; but they might if put in advance of this exercise distract his mind and interfere with the end in view.

In order that this exercise may make a more deep impression, St. Ignatius proposes that we should weigh and study the nature of the pains of Hell through the application of the senses, whereby we in spirit and imagination behold the persons themselves, hear their cries, &c., employing each sense in turn. When making this contemplation two things must be observed: the first is, that we must not fatigue the brain by trying to form too vivid a picture, and including too many points; secondly, after the application of each sense, we must reflect upon ourselves the effects produced if we would draw real profit from it.

[1] *Direct.* xv. 4.

This form of meditation or contemplation is most useful for teaching us how to employ our senses aright, and to correct all undue use of them. St. Ignatius places the application of the senses as the last exercise of the day, because it is one more easy for the exercitant to make when fatigued after the different duties which have gone before.

I would also observe that we cannot live too definitely and distinctly in the fear of Hell. No doubt, through God's mercy, we run less danger than most people; still, as God wills by an express command that we should hope for the happiness of Heaven, He equally ordains that we must have a great fear of Hell; for He warns us, "I say to you, My friends, fear Him who can cast both body and soul into Hell." Besides, there is no one, howsoever holy, who does not find himself sometimes in a critical position, when the fear of Hell becomes wholesome and necessary: moreover, in the Litanies of the Saints we pray to be delivered from the misery of this "everlasting death," as also in the Sacrifice of the Mass, *Ab æterna damnatione nos eripi*, just before the Consecration.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Imagine the length, breadth, and depth of Hell, a vast dark cavern in the very centre of the earth.[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us beg an intense feeling of the punishment of the damned, so that if ever through our own fault we forget the love of our Eternal Lord, at least fear may save us from falling into sin.

First Point.—Let us *picture to ourselves* that vast and lurid dungeon filled with raging fire, in which the

[1] Owing to several passages of Scripture, as Psalms lxii. liv. cxiii., and Ecclus. xvii. 19, &c., many of the Fathers, Justin (*Ep. to Trallenses*), Theophylact (*Ad Autolycum*, ii.), Clement (*Stromata*), Tertullian (*De Anima*, 54), Athanasius (in Psalm lxii.), Hilary (in Isaias), Ephrem, Cyril of Jerusalem and also of Alexandria, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, &c., likewise Rubeir and Soto, hold that Hell is placed underneath the earth. As do the Essenes, Pharisees, and the Talmud.

damned are immersed, but have no light—dense smoke increasing the pitchy darkness, whilst the gloom adds to the horror of the scene. The miserable victims—bound hand and foot—are of deformed and terrible aspect. How fearfully and mysteriously they burn amid the flames! The devils triumph in having made them their prey, and revel in tormenting them, rejoicing that these souls have now themselves become devils, incapable of anything but hating, and deserving only of hatred. Let us dwell on the contemplation of their sadness, terror, gnawing remorse, and black despair. Their number is vast, and comprises all sorts and conditions—priests, Religious, laymen, of all ages, of both sexes—all confounded together under the one common title of the damned. To such has the freedom of the sinner brought him; this is the result of refusing when on earth to praise, love, and serve God! Who can bear the sight of Hell, filled with the damned souls and with devils, for all eternity? Let us then learn to keep a strict guard over our eyes now, for it is by the undue license of our eyes that death first enters into our souls.

Second Point.—Let us imagine that we *hear* the groans, shrieks, reproaches, and blasphemies against Christ our Lord and His saints, as the harsh and horrid sounds re-echo through the deep caverns. Let us listen to the reprobations and mutual curses of accomplices in crime, of bad husbands and wives, of parents and children—amid the mockery and jeers of the devils. How terrible this never-ceasing clamour and battle of cries. How awful the hoarse blasphemies uttered. How sweet is the sorrowful plaint of a true penitent, compared with the loud execrations of the lost in Hell.

Blessed indeed be God who has given us time to praise His loving mercy and to escape His terrible judgments. Let us fly in time from the conversation of worldlings and "hedge in our ears as with thorns,"[1] that we may not join hereafter in their wearied concert in Hell. Let us with every precaution guard our tongues

[1] Ecclus. xxviii. 28.

and thus escape a world of iniquity here and an everlasting cry of despair hereafter.

Third Point.—How terrible, too, the *stench* which must arise from the smoke, sulphur, and corruption of that infected region, which no breath of wind may disperse, but which is ever becoming thicker and thicker, with accumulations from the foul corruption of the bodies of the condemned. It sickens and suffocates without destroying life. What a change for those who during this life covered themselves with unguents and decked themselves out with roses, and could not breathe the same atmosphere as the poor.[1] But the more delicate they had been in life, the greater are their torments now.[2] Let us beware of indulging that refinement of senses which causes so reckless a waste of money, gratifies and feeds our sensuality, and scandalizes or disedifies our neighbour.

Fourth Point.—We may imagine ourselves *tasting* the bitter tears and poisoned cup of the damned; their rage and envy, the venom of the worm of conscience, filling them with unprofitable regrets and disappointments. We may imagine to ourselves their fearful thirst and their gnawing hunger, and all this tormenting them for ever. What do they think now of their waste of time and former indulgences in eating and drinking? How agonizing their reflection: "I did but taste a little honey, and behold I must die."[3] Let us follow the counsel of à Kempis,[4] "Bridle gluttony, and thou wilt the easier bridle every inclination of the flesh." How well the saints under-

[1] "That they might know that by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented. For Thy almighty hand was not unable to breathe out a fiery vapour, or a stinking smoke, whereof the very sight might kill them through fear. And Thou hast ordained all things in measure, and number, and weight." (Wisdom xi. 17, 19, 21.)

[2] "As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her. And the fruits of the desire of thy soul are departed from thee, and all fat and goodly things are perished from thee, for in one hour are so great riches come to naught, and God hath judged His judgment on her." (Apoc. xviii. 7, 14, 17, 20.)

[3] 1 Kings xiv. 43.

[4] Lib. i. c. xix.

stood and practised this maxim. How sadly are we deficient in it, seeking exemptions from fasting and abstinence, under the delusive pretext of preserving our health. Over-eating has killed more men than have ever fallen in battle, and tends to dull all the faculties of the soul.

That we are not already suffering these torments, is owing to the infinite mercy of God.

Fifth Point—Let us ponder on the pains of sense, their intensity, permanence, and eternity,—the fire being kept alive by the breath of an angry God—and containing in itself opposite qualities of light and darkness, of heat and cold, which affect and permeate the soul itself in a manner wholly unknown to us. Let us ask ourselves whether we can bear everlasting burning, or dwell in the flames for ever. What folly and madness it is to expose ourselves to these terrible sufferings, in the midst of which we must shed tears of fruitless repentance for all eternity, rather than give up the pleasures of the world though they were to last for thousands of years!

In the colloquy let us address our Lord Jesus Christ, renewing our sorrow for our sins, and our gratitude for His mercy and goodness, in having so long and so often spared us; and let us beg grace from Him that nothing may ever separate us again from His love. "Here burn, here cut, here spare me not, but spare me in eternity."

End with "Our Father."

ON THE SOUL IN HELL.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine we witness the sufferings of a soul in that dungeon of torture.

Prelude 2.—Let us also beg for light to realize the internal miseries of the reprobate.

First Point.—The worm of conscience rouses its victim to the perpetual recollection that he is lost. He

has lost God his Creator, his Saviour, his beginning, and his last end. How brief these words, but, O God, how vast their meaning. Eternity will not be long enough to understand even a portion of it. He feels that he has lost all good, all honour, all pleasure, all liberty, all consolation, all hope—in fact everything; while in their place he has merely gained countless evils to body and soul. He has lost Father and Mother, the company of the blessed, the sceptre, the throne, and the kingdom destined for him—with none ever to pity or feel for him more! Friendship, sympathy, love and hope are all gone from him.

Second Point.—Another thought which will never cease to torture its poor victim is, that he is lost for so little, and when he might so easily have been saved. So little has been the gratification to him of his past sensuality, avarice, pride, envy, and the like; so short has been the time for that small enjoyment, take it at its longest. Viewed from the standpoint of Hell, time itself seems but a flash of lightning, and earth with all it contains but as a grain of sand. How small and short-lived, then, must appear all those things for which he has sacrificed the possession of God and obtained Hell. And how terrible that constant self-reproach—lost through his own fault, for he might have been saved so easily. He will comprehend all that God has done for his salvation, all that Jesus Christ suffered for his redemption, all that the Holy Ghost has wrought for his sanctification, together with all the graces, the sacraments, sermons and Masses, the counsels and admonitions of God's ministers, and the good example of others that might have benefited him; all these like avenging spirits haunt him, so that he cannot escape them. They show him that it was almost more easy for him to have been saved than lost. Each of them serves only to torment him the more, telling him that he could have been now at this moment in Heaven, whereas he is in Hell!

Third Point.—Can it be that his punishment will end even after a million of ages? Not so; he is lost for ever

—all is over. God exists; but he shall never see Him; angels and saints are reigning in glory, but he shall never join them. No word of comfort or pity now remains for him, but only these tears, this anguish, this torture, this despair for ever. After millions of ages the justice of God will not be satisfied, and he shall be no nearer the end of his torments than when they began.

In my colloquy let me make a sincere act of sorrow for having so often deserved Hell; of gratitude for God's mercy that I am not condemned; and finally, of confidence that in His infinite goodness He has not spared me with the intention of condemning me at the last. With all confidence, therefore, I will beseech Him to grant me the grace of persevering in His holy service until the very end.

"Our Father."

We might in this place well make a meditation on Purgatory, considering the nature of the pains there endured; the helplessness in their own regard of the souls detained therein, and the causes for which they are detained.

St. Ignatius, as we have said, only lays down for the first part of the Exercises, the two meditations on Sin, together with a repetition of each, and an application of the senses on Hell, esteeming these amply sufficient to produce the effect which he had in view, namely, to purge the soul of those vicious affections which withdraw it from the fulfilment of its last end. And in truth, any one of careful thought and of a generous heart, when aided by God's special and efficacious grace, could in one single day find himself changed into another man. Such special graces however God is not wont to give, nor is a man ordinarily endowed with so keen an intellect or so prompt a generosity of soul, as to have his mind wholly untrammelled by passion or his will free from every perverse inclination. Hence we find that, according to their dispositions and measure of grace, and according as they are tried by various spirits, and are earnest in their

efforts, persons attain either sooner or later the object of their desire—true contrition and a firm purpose for the future. Therefore these meditations should be continued according to the needs of each exercitant.[1]

For one, however, who is entangled with inordinate affections, both reason and experience prove the necessity of extending the exercises of the first part; and it is the duty of the director to determine the number and subjects of the meditations best adapted to induce the exercitant to correct the disorder and corruption of his past life. Such subjects are death, the punishment of sin, judgment, &c.

The *Directorium*[2] observes that some of these at least should be given as an efficacious means of detaching the heart from the inordinate love of earthly things, and of inspiring it with a holy fear of God. It is well also that repetitions of these meditations should be made, and that different points should be given in their course, so as to prevent weariness and to impress certain solid truths more deeply.[3]

But whatever subjects be selected, their aim must be directed to the three-fold end for which we pray in the triple colloquy, namely, an intimate knowledge of our sins and deep abhorrence of them; a clear appreciation of the disorder of our life, that, detesting this, we may amend it and regulate it according to God's will; and lastly, a true knowledge of the world, that we may fly from its vanity and hollowness.

In accordance with the instructions of the note in the Spiritual Exercises after the fifth exercise, and of the *Directorium* in chapters xiv. and xv., we will next meditate on Death.

[1] *Direct.* xvii. 1. [2] *Ibid.* xv. 4. [3] *Ibid.* xiv. 1.

ON DEATH.

1. This subject is intimately connected with the preceding meditations on Sin and Hell. For although we may be sincerely penitent for our past sins and irregularities, yet, as long as we are in this world, many objects by which we are surrounded tend to flatter and lead us astray. "The wandering of concupiscence turneth the innocent mind."[1] The danger is both imminent and grave, if we judge things by their appearance and not according to their real value. Now, to form a correct judgment and obviate this danger, our best counsellor is death. *Bonum est consilium tuum, O mors!*[2]

2. We must adapt this meditation to ourselves, and not simply consider death in the abstract. "It is better to go to the house of mourning, for in that we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come."[3] We are not merely to entertain a speculative memory of the latter things, but apply them to our own needs and our own souls. *Memorare novissima tua, et in æternum non peccabis.*[4]

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves condemned to death, having the decree before us, "Thou shalt die and not live."[5]

Prelude 2.—Let us beg grace that we may now form that judgment of the world and all that is in it, of which we shall feel the full force when the sentence is actually carried out in our case.

First Point.—Death is *certain.* Men have called every other truth in question, but not this one. There is no need of faith to convince us of it, for reason and daily experience prove it. It is a decree irrevocable and

[1] Wisdom iv. 12. [2] Ecclus. xli. 3.
[3] Eccles. vii. 3. [4] Ecclus. vii. 40.
[5] Isaias xxxviii. 1.

universal. Such was not God's original intention.[1] Sin has introduced it into the world.[2] Each child of man is doomed, and neither wealth nor skill nor wisdom can avail to prevent it. Nature quivers and trembles at the thought, but to try to drown it is madness, and to ignore it is to resemble the ox.[3]

Let us make an act of submission to the sentence passed upon us:[4] let us humble ourselves before the hand of God.[5] We have sinned, we are great sinners, and consequently we must partake of the fruits of sin, which is death.

Second Point.—Death is the *end* of all *material* things. We must leave riches, honours, pleasures, our very bodies, clothing, ornaments, and all our surroundings. We are like men asleep and dreaming life away; but death is a great awakener, and when he arouses us we shall see and judge all things aright.[6] We cannot take anything with us, but others will dislodge us and bury us beneath a few feet of earth. Granted that our life may have been one of opulence and fame, still we shall die just like the poorest and the most obscure.[7]

Men will speak about us as long as the funeral-bell tolls, but our glory will disperse with the smoke of the extinguished torches,[8] and then the silence of the grave

[1] "For God created man incorruptible, and to the image of His own likeness He made him." (Wisdom ii. 23.)

[2] "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned." (Romans v. 12.)

[3] "Immediately he followed her as an ox led to be a victim, not knowing that he is drawn like a fool to bonds." (Prov. vii. 22.)

[4] "Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right." (Psalm cxviii. 137.)

[5] "I shall now live no longer: spare me, for my days are nothing." (Job vii. 16.)

[6] "As he came forth naked from his mother's womb, so shall he return and shall take nothing away with him of his labour." (Eccles. v. 14.)

[7] "For all men have one entrance into life, and the like going out." (Wisdom vii. 6.)

[8] "For when he shall die he shall take nothing away: nor shall his glory descend with him." (Psalm xlviii. 18.)

will fall upon us. As to our body, it will decay;[1] it will soon become a squalid corpse, it will then decay in pieces and generate worms;[2] until finally it becomes a mere handful of dust.[3]

What folly, then, to attach importance to anything on earth, which is nothing but a phantom, a vision of the night.[4] To form an undue attachment to things of earth, and not to use them as simply means to our true end, is opposed both to reason and faith, it is the height of folly. This thought should drive all vanity out of our head, all vice from the heart: it ought to make us indifferent to everything,[5] and as St. Paul urges,[6] resolute to use this world as if we used it not.

Alas! how foolish have we been to think more of temporal things than of our souls, as if they and ourselves were to last here for ever. Let us pray God to give us some sense at last, and show us the folly of our past disordered life, which has been like a bad nightmare. Let us make an act of faith in the certainty of our future death;[7] let us repent and amend.

Third Point.—Death is *near*. Though the devil cannot delude us so far as to persuade us that we are not to die, yet he flatters us with the idea that we have still many years of life. But even so, the longest life is quickly

[1] "All flesh is grass and all the glory thereof as the flower of the field. The grass is withered and the flower is fallen." (Isaias xl. 6, 7.)

[2] "For when a man shall die, he shall inherit serpents and beasts and worms." (Ecclus. x. 13.)

[3] "Remember I beseech Thee that Thou hast made me as the clay, and Thou wilt bring me into dust again." (Job x. 9.)

[4] "As a dream that fleeth away, he shall not be found; he shall pass as a vision of the night." (Job xx. 8.)

[5] "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job i. 21.)

[6] "Time is short: it remaineth that they who use this world be as if they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31.)

[7] "Behold now I shall sleep in the dust: and if thou seek me in the morning, I shall not be." (Job vii. 21.) "Who am to be consumed as rottenness, and as a garment that is moth-eaten." (Job xiii. 28.)

passed. God assures us that Death does not tarry,[1] that "we know not the day nor the hour."[2] It may come any time, and a breath may extinguish the spark at any moment,[3] on a sudden, as has happened to many whom we have known, at any hour when we expect it least.[4] There is therefore no hour in which we should not be prepared. Let us renew our faith in this important truth, repent our past madness, and resolve to die to every thing and person before they abandon and die to us.

End with the "Our Father."

It will be useful for him who feels himself still inordinately attached to any thing or person, and finds it hard to detach himself from it, to make a repetition on "Death" by a distinct application of the senses to his own death, as can easily be done. When death is actually approaching, it may be said of us, *Incipimus tædere* (*de præteritis*) *pavere* (*de futuris*) and *mæsti esse* (*de præsentibus.*) These would form three excellent points of meditation.

THE WRECK OF THE BODY BY DEATH.

St. John tells us[5] that everything in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. Let us see how great a wreck these make of man's body in the three stages of its decay, in the corpse, the skeleton, and the dust.

[1] "Remember that death is not slow, and that the covenant of Hell hath been shown to thee." (Ecclus. xiv. 12.)

[2] St. Mark xiii. 33.

[3] St. James iv. 14. "Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow."

[4] St. Luke xii. 40. "Be you then also ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come."

[5] "For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the concupiscence thereof. But he that doth the will of God, abideth for ever." (1 St. John ii. 16, 17.)

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves beside a tomb, and imagine we hear these words of warning: *Mihi heri, tibi hodie.*[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us beg of God to show us clearly the vanity of earthly things and the disorder incurred by the indulgence of our passions, and to grant us intense sorrow for having so grievously offended Him by the abuse of our senses.

First Point.—We may safely affirm that in most cases of the loss of an adult soul its ruin has begun with indulgence in sins of the flesh, and that through long continuance in these and a strong attachment to them it has greatly offended God and sacrificed its eternal salvation. It were a mistake to suppose that after death the body for any length of time remains as when we may have last seen it, like a cold and rigid statue, solemnizing though by no means repulsive to the eye.[2] If we were to open the grave a few weeks after death, in what condition should we find each feature and member of the dead body? Let holy Job and the Prophet Isaias reveal this to us. "My flesh is clothed with rottenness and the filth of dust, my skin is withered and drawn together."[3] "Under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering."[4]

Yet how delicately were these once tended, pampered, and almost worshipped; how admired for their beauty and symmetry of form; how richly clad and exquisitely perfumed, but a few short months, it may be, ago. Are we to lose our souls through concupiscence for a flesh which shall soon be changed into filth and corruption, and must end so ignominiously? How confounded and ashamed should one not feel at having sacrificed eternal life and glory for a body like this. Surely we will henceforth crucify our flesh with its vices

[1] "Yesterday for me, for thee to-day." (Ecclus. xxxviii. 23.)

[2] "Behold the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less man that is rottenness, and the son of man who is a worm?" (Job xxv. 5, 6.)

[3] Job vii. 5.

[4] Isaias xiv. 11.

and concupiscences. Would not even my most chosen and devoted friends fly with horror from the sight and stench of my corrupting carcass; as many have actually done in like instances.

Second Point.—Let us open the grave again after a few more years shall have passed, and as we gaze upon that heap of dry bones which is all that is then left, who shall tell whether the flesh-denuded remains be those of a king or a beggar, a man of wealth and learning or of some illiterate peasant—for both alike there is one and the same end, a skeleton—a few dry bones! Not the less is inordinate affection for riches a vice too common.[1] It is the root of many evils,[2] and there is no vice more vile.[3] Besides which, man cannot take his riches with him.[4] How then can we centre our affections upon this tyrant of man, the thirst for wealth and possessions.

Third Point.—When the last stage of decay has been reached, nothing can be discovered of the man once living in the pride of full health and strength than a thin layer of fine dust, on which we may write in all truth: *Universa vanitas, omnis homo vivens.*[5] God formed our bodies out of the dust to fill us with humility at the thought; but He has emphasized and perpetuated the lesson by impressing upon us the fact that this same body of ours shall return to dust.[6] The generations in

[1] "For, from the least of them even to the greatest, all are given to covetousness." (Jeremias vi. 13.)

[2] "For they that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evils, which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows." (1 Timothy vi. 9, 10.)

[3] "But nothing is more wicked than the covetous man. Why is earth and ashes proud?" (Ecclus. x. 9.)

[4] "As he came forth from his mother's womb, so shall he return, and shall take nothing away with him of his labours." (Eccles. v. 14.)

[5] "Indeed all things are vanity, every man living." (Psalm xxxviii. 6.)

[6] "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." (Genesis iii. 19.)

their turn trample on the dust of those who have gone before, for "all men are earth and ashes."[1]

Finish with the triple colloquy.

This last meditation has brought us to the conclusion of the initiative part of the Exercises, in which we have considered the end of each man individually, the end also which God has proposed in the creation of His different creatures and in His having placed them at our disposal as means whereby we are to serve Him and attain our last end. We have seen that our salvation depends entirely on the right use of these creatures, and that sin consists in the abuse of them. We have studied the consequences of that abuse in the terrible and yet most just punishments which God has inflicted and must still inflict on all who are guilty of it, as well as in the deep interior malice and deformity which it has wrought within man's soul and even in his body. And we have also dwelt on the shame and confusion, fear and horror of sin, which should be inspired in us when we reflect upon each and all of our offences against God, and realize their terrible results in the filth and corruption that wastes away our bodies in the grave, and in the agonizing pains which torture every sense in the fires of Hell. Our next step is to prepare and forearm ourselves for the account we shall have to render of our past lives to God, by anticipating in thought that future judgment which awaits us after death. For we stand in need of very special grace to know thoroughly and detest cordially the full criminality of the irregularities and disorders which we have committed in the presence of God. The meditations on His coming judgments will greatly help to strengthen us in our resolution to overcome all human respect, to despise the world and its judgments, to mistrust our own judgment and bring it into strict accord with the unerring judgment of God.

[1] Ecclus. xvii. 31.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Place yourself in thought as a malefactor awaiting sentence from your judge.

Prelude 2.—Recall to your memory the sins of your past life in thought, word, and deed, and judge yourself now for them with that candour and severity which you will wish you had done, when you come to die.

First Point.—My soul must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, by a sudden summons, or after full time of preparation. At the moment of death it will feel itself in the presence of its judge, and find that judgment instantaneously and irrevocably passed. From the spot in which it lay, from the midst of all that it has hitherto known or had any experience of, from friends, associations, and habits, it has passed forth into a far-off, unknown world, alone, stripped of everything, anxious and wondering. In this life sinners presume on their numbers, their position in the world, their power and wealth, their skill and learning, their past usefulness, the esteem of others; but all these supports fail them at that supreme moment, and their whole thought is centred on themselves and on the Divine Judge. Yet it is in this same life that the terrors of their coming judgment may be averted, and a wise foresight of it may and has changed grievous sinners into great saints.

Second Point.—Let us consider the shame and confusion that will take possession of us in this trial. How different will then be our appreciation of good and evil! No excuse will then avail, no forgetting, no denying of the facts alleged against us be possible. If I feel overwhelmed with shame at the bare thought of a serious fault in me being made known to an intimate friend, can any words express my fear and horror that my worst sins should be

revealed to the eye of God and to His pure angels.[1] What, therefore, should I not do to escape this terrible ordeal, and disarm the dread anticipation of a sentence which must determine in an instant my fate for all eternity?

Third Point.—Jesus Christ will be my judge, as Man and as God. He is All-Present, All-Knowing, All-Wise, and All-Mighty, Infinite Truth and Infinite Justice. He Himself,[2] His angels, and my own conscience are the witnesses. Nothing is wanting; no need of pleader or counsel, my case is clear. Neither is this the time for supplication, it is the hour of justice. My particular judgment will not be like the formal process of a legal court, but instantaneous and soon over, as when perhaps the devils are already exulting over the possession of a lost soul in Hell before the body of the dead man is cold, and while his friends are still discussing his merits, and praising or blaming his actions when on earth. Let us follow the advice of Ecclesiasticus, "Before judgment examine thyself, and prepare thee justice, and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God."[3]

In our colloquy we should pray our Blessed Lord, the Judge of the living and the dead, to be our Advocate now, and to gain mercy for us at the hour of Judgment; let us beg through the precious Wounds in His hands, feet, and side, that He will have mercy on us whilst it is the time of mercy, so that He may not condemn us when it is the time of justice. *Juste judex ultionis, donum fac remissionis, ante diem rationis.* End with an act of contrition and "Our Father."

[1] "And all things that are done God will bring into judgment, for every error, whether it be good or evil." (Eccles. xii. 14.)

[2] "I am the Judge and the Witness, saith the Lord." (Jerem. xxix. 23.)

[3] Ecclus. xviii. 19, 20.

REPETITION OF THE PRECEDING.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Study the words of St. Paul: "It is decreed for all men once to die, and after this the Judgment."[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us beg grace to realize the importance of the Judgment, and with filial fear daily to prepare for it.

First Point.—Who is my Judge? It is Jesus Christ. He is good and merciful, my Brother and my Saviour. But He is also Infinite Justice, and according as He shall find us, so He must judge us. The hour and exercise of mercy are closed as soon as the soul has passed from the body, and finds itself in the presence of the Divine Judge.

Second Point.—The examination.—In its fulness and strictness everything will be brought to light; the benefits and graces which we have received; our sins of ignorance, forgetfulness, dissipation; our actions and omissions, both internal and external. Have I flattered myself that they were remitted long ago, or am I reckoning on my good works, as though not spoiled by vanity and self-love. Let us examine and judge ourselves now, that then we may not fear the Judgment. *Quid sum miser tunc dicturus, cum vix justus sit securus?*

Third Point.—The sentence.—This may be Hell for one mortal sin. Purgatory for one venial sin. And yet the woe of being separated even for one hour from God and our Lady. Make your colloquy to each of these.

[1] Hebrews ix. 27.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

The General Judgment differs from the Particular Judgment in these three points. In the former the body and soul are summoned and appear together; in the latter the soul alone is present. In the former every single individual will be exposed and judged before the whole human race in the Valley of Jehosophat; in the latter the soul stands alone. In the former, the sins of all will be made publicly known to all, and all shall be forced to give praise and honour to the good, and to join in the condemnation of the wicked, thus amply vindicating and paying homage to God's infinite justice.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine we see the angels separating the good from the bad, and gathering them round about the judgment-seat of Christ, while the Judge takes His seat thereon, bearing as His standard the emblem of the Holy Cross.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg for the grace of an intense horror of all sin, a very deep sense of our own unworthiness to take our place on the right hand of the throne, and an exuberant joy to witness the triumph of the Cross and of the honour and glory of our God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

First Point.—The Publicity of this Judgment.—The life of every one will be laid bare, from the cradle to the grave, and will be known to all present. The meanness and deformity of all our thoughts, words, and actions, our sins of commission and of omission will be declared in the hearing of all. Equally openly and widely will be proclaimed the graces and benefits which we have received, together with those special supernatural favours which have been lavished upon us and

won for us by the Passion, Wounds, and Death of our Blessed Lord. What a weight of obligations we have incurred as children of God and of our Blessed Mother! Men will be filled with wonder at the infinite generosity of God in our regard, but still more at our heartlessness and ingratitude, if we have abused His merciful love and goodness to us. Who can conceive the terrible shame of this exposure of the wicked, and the humble thankfulness of the elect?

Second Point.—The manifestation of our conversion and return to God.—The whole world will know our every iniquity and abuse of grace, for God will make these manifest to it. "Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts,"[1] and we shall have to confess, I have sinned and have returned evil for good.

On the other hand, if we have been during life reconciled with God or have lived in His holy friendship, how greatly we shall rejoice that in us will be glorified His infinite love and mercy before all men. "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be made wonderful in all them who have believed, whom He hath made worthy of His vocation, and hath enabled them to fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith in power."[2]

Third Point.—The sentence pronounced will be, *secundum opera*. The deeds of our past lives will await us at the judgment-seat. If in these we have violated our duties as creatures, rebelled against the authority of our King, have ignored Jesus as our Redeemer, have been unfilial to our Heavenly Father, and have grieved and vexed the Holy Spirit of God, and this in grave matters and to a serious extent, we must then be prepared to receive the awful sentence, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink. I was a stranger and you took Me not in; naked and you

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 5. [2] 2 Thess. i. 10.

covered Me not; sick and in prison and you did not visit Me."[1]

But, on the other hand, if found not wanting, then shall we be welcomed with these thrice-blessed words, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."[2]

Let us ponder carefully over each word of these two sentences and so shape our definite choice for the future. In a spirit of tender compunction and deep gratitude beg of our dear Lord, with holy David, to pierce our very flesh with the holy fear of His judgments.

End with the "Our Father."

REPETITION OF THE MEDITATION.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—*The History.*—The Son of Man shall come in His Majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon His seat of judgment, all nations of the dead shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, setting the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left, and He shall pass sentence on each one. Then will the earth be consumed by fire, and time and the world shall have an end.

Prelude 2.—Let us remember that we too will be present at that great day of account and so can easily imagine ourselves gazing with awe on the recesses and heights of Jehosophat when our Lord shall come to judge all men. Let us therefore now beg for light to realize the circumstances of that Last Day, and grace to be confirmed in our hatred of sin, in our contempt for the world and its vanities, as well as in a filial fear of the power and justice of God our Lord.

First Point.—The Destruction of the World.—The sun

[1] St. Matt. xxv. 41—43. [2] St. Matt. xxv. 34.

and the moon will be extinguished, the stars shall fall from heaven, the earth shall quake and be opened out, the sea will be lashed into fury, the very animals will seek to revenge on man his rebellion against God, and all men will shrivel up with terror and dread of what is to come. Men will even rise up to wreak vengeance upon each other, and multitudes will die of famine, plague, and fright.[1]

How can we be so foolish as to attach ourselves to what will be only fuel for the universal flames, and so pass away. Then shall come the summons: *Surgite mortui et venite ad judicium.* Woe to those who ignore or disbelieve the resurrection. Whereas happy alone are those who have believed and have said, *Expecto resurrectionem mortuorum.*[2]

Second Point.—The Coming of Jesus Christ.—Angels will herald His appearance, to the delight of the good and despair of the wicked. Next He will take His seat, surrounded by all the hosts of the spirit world and resplendent with mighty power and majesty. How wonderful the contrast between His first and His second Advent. Now Heaven and Earth and Hell itself cannot help but join in one sublime act of adoration of the Man-God, the Head and King of all things created. From the wicked will be forced the confession: "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold how they are now numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. Their reward is with the Lord, therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord."[3] O God, make us now poor, humble, unknown, and despised with Thee, that on that day we may, through Thee, rejoice and glorify Thy mercy. Then shall the books be opened, wherein are recorded all those things on which judgment is to be passed, for the glorification of the good who in life have by tears of repentance and by good works repaired their offences and laid up

[1] St. Matt. xxiv. 27—31; St. Luke xxi. 25, 28, 33.
[2] 2 St. Peter iii. 4—14. [3] Wisdom v. 4, 5, 17.

treasures in Heaven, and for the eternal and universal shame of the wicked, whose evil deeds will cling to them —*tua opera sumus non te derelinquemur*, we are thy works and we will not be parted from thee.

Third Point.—The Sentence. Venite—Come, the winter is over with its storms, its sufferings, its trials, and its tears. Come, ye blessed of My Father; blessed in body and in soul, come to occupy your thrones. Your crowns and sceptres are awaiting you. Oh! the glory and the raptures of that great day for the good, a thrice-blessed reward assuredly for ages of hard labour and trials and suffering. Heaven's gates will be flung open wide for the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ and His saints. Wherefore let us pray, *Ne me perdas illa die.* Here burn, here cut, here spare me not; only spare me for eternity.

End with the "Our Father."

THE SHORTNESS OF TIME.

This meditation should greatly help to detach us from the love of the world and its seductions, and to fill us with contempt for its false promises.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine ourselves waiting for our summons to quit this world and all things here below.

Prelude 2.—Pray earnestly that you may be deeply impressed by the conviction how short this life is, how brief its trials and sorrows are, as well as its joys.

First Point.—How short, when we look back upon it, has been the full span of man's life here upon earth, and even out of that short time, how small is the proportion of it that has been actively and faithfully given to God. Pass over the years of infancy, the hours spent in sleep, in meals, in unnecessary amusements and recreations, the waste of many hours and days through tepidity, or frivolity, the years clouded over with God's

aversion or condemnation. And how little remains of profitable and meritorious service before God; how few the years spent for Heaven and Eternity—almost as few as those passed ordinarily in learning a trade or profession. How short, then, the time we have turned to any really good account; how chequered and painful is our remembrance of the years that are gone.

Second Point.—Again, not only is this time so short in itself, but its brevity is intensified when we compare even the longest life of man on earth with the endlessness of his eternity. Job lived until nearly three hundred years old, and yet he counts these as nothing. They are passed and gone with greater speed than the rider borne along on his courser, than a vessel before the wind, than leaves on the autumn blast. Reckon up all the seconds of your life and take them as so many years, even then they would be nothing more than a dream when compared with eternity, your happiness during which depends upon the right use of every moment of this life.

Third Point.—What folly, then, to allow ourselves to be affected by the things of this world, by its false and fleeting pleasures, its aims, its honours, and all that it esteems, loves, and prides itself upon. We have no secure possession of them, we cannot possibly retain them for any length of time. Consideration for ourselves and the most ordinary prudence urge us to detach our hearts and affections from them; reason teaches us that an immortal spirit cannot find solid or lasting satisfaction in things which are so finite, so stamped with mortality, so evanescent; while experience proves them to be vanity of vanities, begetting only trouble, disappointment, and positive dislike. As a matter of principle also, faith and reason combine to inculcate the necessity at all times and in all circumstances of regulating our lives according to the reality and not the look of things, with the clear and definite view of securing our true and eternal interests.

In our colloquy let us earnestly beg this grace of God, and end with the *Lord's Prayer*.

After deepening in our minds a holy and salutary fear of God, all wise, all just, and all holy, and at the same time a strong conviction of our own unworthiness and ingratitude, our resolution to avoid all sin for the future will be greatly strengthened by encouraging within ourselves a humble yet most firm confidence in God's infinite goodness and His earnest desire that we should not feel the yoke of His service too bitter, nor His burden too heavy. He assures us that both are in reality light, and if only we put our whole trust in Him, we shall make rapid progress in His service, and shall be able to say with holy David: "I have run in the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart."[1]

The three meditations that follow are well calculated to fill our hearts with the dispositions most requisite and useful for making a good confession, which is the main object of this part of the Exercises. Any of these meditations will therefore find a fit place here, according to each exercitant's circumstances and position.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON.[2]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us join the crowd gathered round our Blessed Lord, and pay every attention to His words.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg Him to give us a most true sorrow for having only too faithfully imitated the Prodigal's example in leaving his father's house, and grace

[1] Psalm cxviii. 32.

[2] "And He said: A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country: and there wasted his substance, living riotously. And after he had spent all there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man

to imitate him also in his full repentance and in his return to the house he had left.

First Point. — *The Prodigal's departure.* — Consider the happiness in which the father, represented in the parable, lived with his sons, as long as both remained simple-hearted and innocent. They were happy in their mutual love, happy, too, in having everything that they could profitably desire, they were honoured and respected by all in the household. The two sons were evidently of different dispositions; the elder, being more solid in character and free from violent temptations, bore without difficulty the restraints and regularity of their home life. His younger brother, however, soon grew restless and discontented, feeling more and more the weariness and monotony of the life he led, and seeking every opportunity of gaining greater freedom and more exciting recreation elsewhere. This desire leads him into bad company, where he joins with others in idle and mischievous conversations, imbibes from them false and corrupting principles, and finally yields up his conscience, his prudence, and his better judgment, to the influence of their bad example. New views are taken up of authority and rights, it is fair he should resent undue control, restraint for the sake of thwarting. He ought to be allowed liberty of thought, freedom to do as he likes, and to gratify his legitimate love of pleasure and the passions that are natural to him. Hence he at last

gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger? I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee; I am not now worthy to be called thy child; make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to the servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: because this my son was dead, and is come to life again, was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." (St. Luke xv. 11—24.)

boldly asserts his independence and breaks loose from all restraint. He demands the possession of his patrimony that he may take his future life into his own hands, and go forth into the world to push his way according to his own ideas, and so make a name for himself. Yet he had been most blest and favoured as he advanced in years, though without a direct claim to have anything, he wanted for nothing, and even now his truly loving father will not deny his request.

Our Blessed Lord is surely here giving in prophecy our own history. We were loving and obedient children of our Heavenly Father, who most truly loves us. We wanted for no spiritual grace or blessing, since in the Father, and in the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, and in our Elder Brother Jesus, we had all that we truly needed, and we held the title-deeds to our inheritance of eternal glory. We were under the protection of the Church and of our Holy Mother in Heaven, we were fed daily by the sacraments and washed our souls pure in the waters of absolution. But alas for the day when we claimed our free-will from God and abused it, and when, striking off from the path of God's holy counsels and commandments, we wandered into a far distant country. How far, we neither intended, nor suspected, nor would have believed possible, at first setting out. *Longe est Dominus ab impiis.*[1]

Second Point.—The disorders and miserable state into which the Prodigal fell.—All went prosperously with him at first. He spent his goods lavishly, and therefore made many friends. He was open-hearted and generous towards them, all found him amiable and cheerful, they sought his company and were ready enough to help in spending money, and to share in his pleasures and extravagances. Hence it did not take long to squander what substance he had, but the moment that a failure of funds, that reverses, anxieties, loss of health, or of his power of enjoyment began to make his company less pleasant or useful, all his false friends grew cold and

[1] Prov. xv. 29.

then washed their hands of him, giving him but scant sympathy and declaring their inability to render him any assistance in his hour of need. It was then that he realized, as is so graphically described in the parable, "there had come a mighty famine in that country." He looked round in vain for gratitude, for brotherly kindness, for charity, there was no one to pity him, no thought of denying self in order to give to a fellow-creature; no bowels of mercy stirred any breast, not a soul tried to console, or strengthen, or encourage him, or bid him hope in God. But, saddest of all, that terrible famine and barrenness filled and possessed the Prodigal's own soul. Once, when in a state of grace, the supernatural life had crowned his human nature "according to God's most great and precious promises, whereby we may be made partakers of the divine nature,"[1] but now sin has disinherited him[2] and extinguished this divine life. Another famine had also spread over that land, the drying up of the soul's moral life when conscience, its chief sustainer, is choked up and silenced, when the heart is contaminated with vile affections, and in order to indulge them becomes cold, indifferent, selfish, and barren of all good. "His heart is ashes, and his hope vain earth, and his life more bare than clay: for as much as he knew not his Maker and Him that breathed into him a living spirit."[3] There is a sad dearth also of moral principle in the paralysis and disorder of his will when it became the helpless slave of every deadly, soul-destroying passion. Lastly, this mighty famine spreads its blight into the mind and intellect, when it perverts the aims and conclusions of science, corrupts every literary and artistic taste, or loads the memory and imagination with thoughts and suggestions that are sensuous or, it may be, sensual, and at the best are utterly profitless.

Third Point.—The Prodigal's repentance and return.—There are three stages in this portion of his career—*in se autem reversus.* He reflected upon his present state, and in a few brief words drew the contrast between his own

[1] 2 St. Peter i. 4. [2] St. James i. 15. [3] Wisdom xv. 10, 11.

abject misery and starvation, and the comfort and abundance enjoyed by the very menials in his father's house. We note that the conversion of his heart is but gradual, that it does not yet touch the chord of even attrition, nor strike home to the conscience. The first impression is chiefly one of gnawing hunger, the next is the envy-stirring picture of the unstinting supply of food which might and ought to have been at that moment his as well as theirs. Then springs of higher, kindlier, more unselfish thoughts begin to vibrate within his breast, his heart opens out to the softening memories of his home, to that last glance of a sorrowful leave-taking which told all the tender affection of a parent who would rather die of a broken heart than refuse anything to his erring child. Next the conviction steals into his mind that although he had turned his back upon his father and had well-nigh forgotten even his existence, that father had never for a moment forgotten him, had never ceased to pray for him, to look out for his return. His fault, his folly, ingratitude and hardness of heart, now suddenly break in upon his consciousness and make irresistible appeal to his conscience, calling loudly upon him to return at once to his father and pour forth a most humble confession of sin into his ear. He spends little time in debate, that interior voice can no longer be silenced, and its note is clear, bidding him to "arise and go to his father, and to say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee. I am now not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

The summons which it bears finds immediate echo in the equally clear terms of his own firm resolution, not only made but promptly acted upon, acted upon to the letter, and with a will that, once thoroughly aroused, carries all before it. *Surgam et ibo*, no fear of ridicule or rebuff, no false shame, no possible humiliation, not even my father's rejection shall now turn me aside. Though I deserve the worst, I have the fullest trust in the inexhaustible love and forbearance of a father's heart. Nor was he disappointed. *Cum autem adhuc longe esset*

vidit illum pater ipsius, et misericordia motus est, et accurrens cecidit super collum ejus, et osculatus est eum. See a beautiful type of parental solicitude in the history of Tobias x., xi. Note how clearly and pointedly the chapter of St. Luke, whence this parable is taken, introduces it not so much as the history of a conversion, as it is a vivid and detailed illustration of the intense joy felt by our Heavenly Father and by His holy angels over the conversion of the greatest sinner. It was addressed as a correction and reproof to those who steeled their hearts against the sinner; our Lord's design in it was to impart a divine character to the rejoicing of the good shepherd over the sheep that he had lost, and again of the woman who had found her missing groat, and then in an ascending scale of the joy felt in Heaven, not so much by the angels, as by God Himself in the presence of the angels, over "one sinner doing penance," while the parable itself hurries forward to the development of its main object, the magnifying, namely, of the infinite tender mercies of our Father who is in Heaven. Dwell on the tenderness and delicacy of description with which Jesus Himself treats of the approach of the returning Prodigal for whom his father was always and unceasingly on the watch with longing eyes, and with loving and compassionate heart. So that he saw him while still a long way off, did not wait for his self-accusation, but forgave him by anticipation and hastened to give him the embrace of reconciliation, caressing him in the exuberance of his thankfulness, and kissing him with the kiss of peace. Mark how quickly the father reads the genuineness and completeness of his son's repentance, how generously and liberally he responds to it, accepting it to the full, not by assurances but by acts that crowded in upon his long-lost child the practical tokens of a delighted reinstatement into a position, not only far in advance of his modest petition, but equally so of any privilege that he had before enjoyed. Here is our title-deed to a welcome of like fulness and liberality from our Heavenly Father, if only with the Prodigal we ourselves return to Him.

Conclude with the "Our Father."

THE BRIEF FALL AND LIFE-LONG CONVERSION OF ST. PETER.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Brief history of the contemplation. We read that Peter, full of love for Jesus Christ, after protesting thrice that he would not betray Him, placed himself in the imminent risk of doing so, and unhappily fell: but memories awakened by the loving glance of our Blessed Lord, and by the crowing of the cock, recall him to repentance, while his tears gain for him a most merciful pardon.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves following him with our eyes, as he passes quickly into some retired spot where he can weep and lament over his fall.

Prelude 3.—Let us earnestly pray Jesus to look mercifully upon us, and move us also to repentance, and to entire confidence in Him.

First Point.—St. Peter's character.—He was prompt and generous in responding to our Lord's call, and after giving himself up wholly to Jesus, his love and fervour never flagged. He was more ready of speech than any of his fellow-Apostles, and was the first to confess his faith in the Divinity of the Son of Man, drawing forth thereby the especial blessing and favour of his Master, "Blessed art thou Simon-Barjona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in Heaven."[2]

Here let us reflect how He has called us also and

[1] "But Peter sat without in the court; and there came to him a servant-maid saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: that I know not the man. And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them. Then he began to curse and to swear, that he knew not the man." (St. Matt. xxvi. 69—75.)

[2] St. Matt. xvi. 17.

brought us through the gate of Baptism into His Church, whereby we became members of His family and of His Mystical Body. And when we made our First Communion, how fervent we were, how we pledged to Him our love, and our resolution to cling to Him, and never again to abandon Him. Again, if we have been called to Religion, we were at first so deeply in earnest, so diligent in prayer, so faithful to each duty in its turn.

During the three years of our Lord's Public Ministry we see Peter casting out devils, present on Thabor at the Transfiguràtion, and at the Last Supper refusing in his shocked humility to allow Jesus to wash his feet, &c. Yet at the same time his natural disposition was still strong in him, he continued to be hasty and impulsive, eager and self-reliant, rough and out-spoken, free of speech without sufficient forethought to weigh his words carefully. This made him suddenly bold both in word and action, and equally sudden in taking alarm and losing heart, over-confident in assuring his Divine Master of his staunch courage in facing every peril or difficulty, even should the other disciples without exception abandon Him. The strength of his love for Jesus and attachment to His person was beyond all doubt, but its very intensity blinded him to the perception of his own instability when unexpectedly confronted with danger.

Second Point.—St. Peter's fall.—The combination in his natural character of unconsidered zeal with inconsistency of execution, prepared the way for this. On the Mount of Transfiguration he had been all energy and self-devotion, yet in the Garden, instead of persevering in watchfulness, he thrice fell asleep, though twice awakened by his Master, pathetically remonstrated with for his failure in help and sympathy, and warned of the perilous consequences of neglecting prayer and vigilance. Then while love drew his timid steps after our Lord, though urged on by a purposeless curiosity to see the end, unsustained by prayer, or any appeal for help and grace, he exposed himself to fresh danger by placing himself at the fire in the midst of bad company, with whom he

joins in conversation, and so through seeking the occasion he falls; not alas! by simple relapse into his desertion of his Master because of momentary fright, but by a definite, deliberate, and reiterated denial of any fellowship with, or even knowledge of our Lord, and this coupled with the humiliating disgrace of turning coward before the chance remark of a servant-maid. A most terrible fall indeed! But let us look to ourselves. Have not we also, favoured like St. Peter with special graces and privileges, grown remiss in prayer, sought self-ease, indulged in perilous and worldly company, acted through vanity or other perverse intention, and with an infatuated imprudence, until the fall came that was to be expected?

Third Point.—St. Peter's repentance.—As there had been no premeditation in the Apostle's hurried and panic-stricken denial of his Master, and as his words really belied the deep-seated faith and love which his heart bore towards Him, the first sorrow-laden glance which from the eye of our Lord pierced into his inmost soul found immediate response, awakening conscience and the full sense of his sin, with such overwhelming shame and horror, grief and agony of mind, that for the rest of his life ever after, his cheeks became furrowed by the big hot tears that daily poured down them, each time there came to him the memory of his sin. The eye of Jesus had also read at a glance the reality, the depth, and the thoroughness of his repentance. He calls the penitent disciple to His side, that He may with a kind severity remind him most pointedly of his triple denial. Yet in each reminder He clearly intimates His complete forgiveness and reconciliation, for, in the first case, He appeals thrice to St. Peter's pre-eminent love for Him: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" and in the second, He appoints him to a high and permanent charge, makes him His Vicar upon earth, and the visible foundation and Head of His Church. Oh! what a lesson for us. If He thus spared His favourite Apostle, so also will He spare us, if, like Peter, we repent from our hearts, even though sharing in the Priesthood, and

charged with the weighty grace and responsibility of the religious vows, provided we fly from the occasions which may have exposed us to sin, or even led us to commit it, and strive to imitate the once erring Apostle in his love and confidence.

End with a colloquy to our Lady, and to our Blessed Lord. "Our Father."

CONVERSION OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Read carefully the brief history recorded by St. Luke, and given below.[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the dining-chamber of Simon the Pharisee, where Mary kneels, weeping at the feet of Jesus.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg the grace we most require, of giving heed to the call of our Blessed Lord, and of returning His love, with the resolution never again to be separated from Him.

[1] "And standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. And the Pharisee who had invited Him, seeing it, spoke within himself, saying: This Man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that touches Him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said to him: Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee. But he said: Master, say it. A certain creditor had two debtors, the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most? Simon answering said: I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And He said to him: Thou hast judged rightly. And turning to the woman He said unto Simon: Dost thou see this woman? I entered thy house; thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but she, since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed My feet; wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much. But to whom less is forgiven, he loveth less. And He said to her: Thy sins are forgiven thee. . . . And He said to the woman: Thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." (St. Luke vii. 38—50.)

First Point.—Mary Magdalene's previous life and character.—Belonging to the family of Lazarus and Martha she was highly cultured, held a good position in society, and possessed wealth and means of her own. She was in the full bloom of youth, was gifted with beauty of person, with mental talent and accomplishments, and with an amiable and attractive manner. These qualities, combined with a life of dissipation and of unbridled self-indulgence, made her company all the more dangerous to those who sought her acquaintance, while pride and vanity entangled her still more every day in the toils of the world and of sin. All her gifts were employed by her against the interests of God and of her own soul, and yet Jesus saw the better points in her character, and in His infinite mercy and goodness earnestly longed for her conversion.

Though she did not seem to have shared with her brother and sister in their home, Mary must have known of our Lord from them, and must have had opportunities of seeing and observing Him. Upon a certain day her attention was drawn to the house of Simon the Pharisee by a crowd which had gathered round it, and she approached the entrance and mingled with the guests. At once recognizing the countenance of our Blessed Lord, she began to study His features, feeling her interior soul deeply stirred by their expression of supernatural sanctity and modesty, of gentle love and perfect peace. At the sound of His voice her whole attention became riveted on His words, and as He spoke her past life assumed a new aspect before her eyes, now at last opened to a full sense of all its shame, depravity, and ingratitude. Grace has touched her heart, an intense longing for Divine mercy and forgiveness fills her with a strange hope and confidence of pardon, because while she was inwardly convinced that the words of Jesus, so adapted to her case, were specially addressed to herself, they were words, not of denunciation, but of gentle reproof and persuasiveness. Full of indignation at the haughty and inhospitable manner in which He had been received by His host, she

in a sudden impulse of sympathy and devotion, dishevels her hair, flings herself on her knees at our Lord's feet, washes them with the tears of compunction that pour down from her eyes, wiped them reverentially with the thick tresses that had before only administered to her own vain adornment, and anoints them lavishly with the ointment she had hitherto reserved for the pampering of her own flesh. Her heart meanwhile is broken with grief at the loathsome sight of the corruption of her soul and her many iniquities, and her act pleads for mercy, in the new confidence that her prayer will be heard. Let us consider how guilty we too have been, how many inspirations we have passed by unheeded, how multiplied have been our sins of commission and omission, of scandal and bad example. When the same Jesus calls us and urges us to return, how sadly different is our answer to His call!

Second Point.—The predominant feelings in Magdalene's breast were those of deepest and most tender contrition and of an all absorbing love, for she had read the Saviour's forgiveness in the melting tenderness of His glance and in the virtue which had passed from His Sacred Heart into her soul, had healed it of its wounds, and stilled the tempest that disturbed her peace. And she had read the Saviour's meaning aright, for now He exposes the false judgment of the Pharisee, and declares to him that the Magdalene's many sins are forgiven her for that she loved much. To the penitent herself Jesus utters no word of reproach, but lovingly welcomes and encourages her, filling her soul with joy and peace. Let us imitate the thoroughness of the conversion of one who afterwards became a great saint, and we shall meet with a like reception, *Bonus est Dominus sperantibus in Illum.*[1]

Third Point.—Mary Magdalene by a single resolve, made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, broke asunder all the chains of habitual wantonness and profane love. In that moment she effectually and for ever trampled the world under foot, as she had heroically

[1] Lament. iii. 25.

begun by triumphing over human respect, in one of its most trying ordeals. From this time forward she bids an eternal farewell to all her former friends and partners in guilt, holding them in abomination. In her trials and temptations she remains firm and faithful, supported by her love and confidence in God, who on His side makes her sacrifices sweet and easy to her, and fills her interiorly with holy consolations. He comforts her, commends her, boldly and openly defends her, and foretells that what she has done shall be announced throughout the whole world, for all times, wheresoever His Gospel shall be preached. He specially honours her by choosing her to be present at His Death beneath the Cross, by appearing to her first of the other women who had followed Him, and by sending her as His selected messenger to tell the Apostles that He had risen. And yet, notwithstanding all this, what is the goodness He manifested towards Mary Magdalene when compared with that which He has shown to us? For He has not once but times without number pronounced His forgiveness of our manifold sins and offences, He has heaped endless graces upon us. Oh! who will not dearly love Him then? who can refuse to have unbounded confidence in Him?

In our colloquy let us say with our whole hearts: O Jesus, Thou hast conquered. I throw myself, a contrite sinner, at Thy sacred feet. Vouchsafe to receive me, Thy poor and unworthy suppliant, and may I henceforth be Thine alone.

End with the "Our Father."

THE SECOND WEEK.

THE ILLUMINATIVE WAY.

1. As the Israelites, after long years of slavery in Egypt, were at length, under the guidance of His servant Moses, rescued by God from their cruel captivity and from the miseries which they endured beneath the galling tyranny of the Pharoahs, so, by the loving mercy of the same God, have we been liberated from the far heavier slavery and more terrible oppression of the devil, that implacable enemy of our human nature, and from the more fearful miseries in which our sins and inordinate affections have plunged us. The chains with which our unbridled passions and the wiles of the devil had bound us have been broken, and we ourselves have been set free.

2. But before the people of Israel could reach the land God had promised them, the land flowing with milk and honey, they had to spend forty years in much suffering. During that time they endured hunger and thirst, they wandered about in long journeyings amid the barren sands of the desert, and were engaged in many a hard-fought battle by enemies who seemed on the point of overwhelming them, though, "by the mercy of God they were not consumed," till at length, under His special guidance and protection, they reached the end of their journey. We, too, after attaining our freedom, have to fight our way to the land promised to us as our everlasting home; our road also lies through desert places, and is beset with many dangers and hard-

ships, and at any and every time we are exposed to the fierce assaults of our spiritual enemies and to the no less dangerous attacks of our own rebellious passions and vicious inclinations, and must be constantly on our guard against surprises, being ready to combat and repel all our foes.

3. It is for this reason that in the second part of the Exercises St. Ignatius so often speaks of war and conquest, and represents our Blessed Lord as our King and Captain, "Our Lord is a Man of war,"[1] the Captain of the elect; whilst he represents the devil as the arch-rebel and leader of the hosts of darkness.

4. In order that, notwithstanding our fallen nature, we might succeed in attaining Heaven, it was necessary that our Lord should come down upon earth to point out to us the true way thither, that He should pay our ransom, and should provide us with the means and weapons by which alone we can secure the victory,[2] nay, should be Himself "our way, our truth, and our life."[3] Therefore did He come with the price of our redemption in one hand, with a sword in the other,[4] and so place Himself at our head and combat along with us. He sets us in His life an example which, whatever may be our state or position in the world, is eminently *practical* and also *glorious*, for as He has conquered and been crowned with victory, we shall share with Him in the fruits of that victory, if only we imitate Him in the strife.

5. Now if we are to make Him our model, we must apply ourselves to study His example, we must acquire a practical knowledge of Him, of His exterior and interior, His conduct, His virtues, His ideas, His intentions and maxims. Such study will awaken in our breasts equal love and admiration, we will feel ourselves powerfully drawn towards Him and inspired with a very ardent desire to take up our cross and follow Him.

6. To render ourselves like Jesus Christ and con-

[1] Exodus xv. 3. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 57. [3] St. John xiv. 6.

[4] "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came, not to send peace, but the sword." (St. Matt. x. 34.)

formable to His image, is the one great object of the Christian's life, and is the condition without which we cannot possibly please God and obtain eternal happiness, as St. Paul teaches, "For whom He foreknew He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son: that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren."[1] Some of course are called to a more perfect, others to a less perfect resemblance, according to the measure of God's grace imparted to them, and the nature of the vocation to which God in His providence may call them. This depends entirely upon His own free choice; but all Christians are bound in their several states to a certain degree of imitation.

7. Those who are called to the closest imitation of our Blessed Lord, mingling the virtues of the active life with those of the contemplative, as in the Society of Jesus, are under obligation to be pre-eminently exercised and skilled in the principles inculcated in this part of the Exercises, otherwise they can scarcely hope to procure effectually the greater glory of God, to be able to strip themselves of all self-love and merely earthly affections, and to be men dead to the world, crucified to the world, to whom also the world is crucified: men ready, should it be God's good pleasure, to lay down life itself in promoting the greater glory of Him who has selected them to so exalted a vocation.

8. The second degree of our perfection in imitating the example of our Blessed Lord will be to excel in poverty of spirit by rooting out of our hearts every inclination to earthly possessions, or to those comforts and conveniences that attend upon the enjoyment of wealth, whether material or intellectual, natural or even spiritual, according to the principles laid down in the Foundation.

While the third degree will be to imitate our Lord in His actual poverty also, of which we have examples during the whole course of His Life from the manger of Bethlehem to the sepulchre on Calvary, careful in each

[1] Romans viii. 29.

instance to note and to assimilate ourselves to His interior spirit of humility and love of humiliations.

9. Many persons cannot understand why St. Ignatius, when drawing out a plan for the series of meditations on the Mysteries of our Lord's Life, which are placed immediately after the "Three Methods of Prayer," should have, without further notice or comment, and with the utmost brevity, given the subject for each meditation under three separate points; whereas in the contemplations on the Incarnation and Nativity, which commence the exercise of the Second Week, or the Illuminative Way, he draws out a different style of points, directing us to consider under these the Persons, Words, and Actions of those who are presented to us, and to continue this method throughout all the mysteries. The explanation is, first, that in the above mysteries, being introductory to the rest, he combines along with the subject-matter of the three different points of the meditation, the three varieties of form and manner in which he wishes each point to be treated, in order that it may become more practical to us, that we may be able to enter into it more fully, and derive greater benefit and fruit from it. Thus having in the two first instances interwoven the form along with the matter and directed us to follow the same form, where it can be, in the other meditations he afterwards simply gives the subjects of each meditation by themselves. It may be observed that the series of meditations thus given, consists chiefly of a succession of pictures or representations, quoted from the words of Scripture.

A second point in the explanation is that the natural way of meditating upon an event actually occurring in our Lord's life is to contemplate the actions or words of each person present in the scene. We must not, however, dwell too long on any of these, but in an especial manner confine our study to the Person of our Blessed Lord, drawing from Him the chief lessons as to our own conduct in glorifying, serving, and praising God as He did, thus moulding ourselves on the Life of Jesus Christ.

10. We must here take notice that in making the contemplations a prelude is introduced before the two previously used. In it we are to take a cursory view of the history of the mystery we are about to enter upon, not part by part as in the contemplation itself, but only in general; after the manner of those who before examining the beauties of some fine painting in detail retire a little distance in order to connect them together in a general view.[1]

11. During this portion of the retreat certain changes have to be made in the Additions and Annotations, as St. Ignatius tells us at the end of his Fifth Contemplation. Thus in the second Addition: We are, upon waking, to turn our mind to the contemplation which we are going to make, with an earnest desire to know the Eternal and Incarnate Word, that thereby we may serve Him better and may follow Him more closely.

In the sixth Addition: We are frequently to recall the memory of the Life and mysteries of Christ our Lord, from His Incarnation up to the mystery on which we are next going to meditate.

In the seventh Addition: We must make use of obscurity or light, of fine weather or the reverse, just as far as they may conduce to kindle those affections and sentiments which are suitable to and accord with the mystery which we have in hand.

In the tenth Addition: We must, above all, earnestly practise internal mortification, withdrawing every affection of our hearts from all worldly things that we may fix them on God alone; and we must frequently excite in ourselves ardent desires to love and glorify Him at all cost, such being the main scope of this part of the retreat.

12. St. Ignatius also observes that sometimes, even though the exercitant be of vigorous and robust constitution, it is of advantage to introduce a little change by way of variety for some days, either as to the hours, or the number, or both, of the exercises and contemplations, keeping always well in view the end desired.

[1] *Direct.* xix. § 4.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

Having by God's grace laid aside the old man of sin, and resolved to order our lives aright for the time to come, let us pray with St. Paul: "O Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" or exclaim, in the words of St. Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And the answer of Jesus Christ to both of these questions is, "Come thou, and follow Me." With this call of our Blessed Lord we now wish to comply, hence it forms the first object of our meditation when entering upon the Second Week.

As the Foundation of the whole spiritual life rests upon the design of God in the creation of man, so the Principle and Foundation of the second and third parts of the Exercises, treating of the Passion and Death of our Lord, is summed up in the consideration which St. Ignatius entitles "The Kingdom of Christ." In doing this he adopts the terms used by our Blessed Lord Himself when describing His Church, because the imitation of Him involves, first the knowledge and love of His Person; secondly, a clear understanding of the cause which He represents and we are called upon to embrace; and thirdly a thorough appreciation of the degree of generosity with which we should devote ourselves to His cause. We can thus enter in detail into His Life, and derive full profit from its several mysteries.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine we see the different cities, towns, and villages through which, amid fatigues, privation, ignominy, and even peril of His life, our Lord passed, teaching the truths of His Spiritual Kingdom.

Prelude 2.—Let us ask for the special grace which we desire, that we should not be deaf to His call, but prompt and diligent in fulfilling His most holy will.

1. As an introduction to this contemplation, let us, by way of allegory, picture to ourselves an earthly king, who unites in himself all those qualities which are calcu-

lated to awaken esteem, respect, love, and enthusiasm, who holds his authority directly from God, and has been placed by Him on the throne, from which he reigns over many wide dominions.

2. This king, living in a past age of chivalry, proclaims a crusade against the infidels, with the intention of bringing the countries possessed by them under the Christian yoke, and hence he invites all his subjects to join him in this grand enterprise. But he requires that those who respond to his call must be content to put up with the same usage and treatment as their king, to bear cheerfully the like hardships as to food, clothing, and labours, fatigue, dangers, and constant watchfulness. On the other hand, when the contest is over and the victory is won, they will undoubtedly share in the fruits of the conquest, in its happiness and reward, in proportion as they have borne their part in the toils and trials of the strife.

3. Doubtless every loyal subject, and especially such as are of princely race, will pledge themselves with one voice to follow so generous a leader with the greatest promptitude and devotedness whithersoever he may be pleased to guide them; and he who should demur or hesitate would be an object of pity and contempt, and would be branded as a coward, especially when the cause is so noble, the conditions so just and liberal, and the commander himself so large-hearted.

Let us now come to the reality thus foreshadowed, and apply the above invitation of a temporal king, to the invitation which we have received from our spiritual and Heavenly King, the only-begotten Son of God, the Lord and Master of the universe, whose subjects we are by nature, and to whom we essentially owe all possible homage, respect, and love.

First Point.—This King and Lord of all has come down from Heaven to earth on purpose to bring back man to the love and service of His Eternal Father, and, having subdued the world, the flesh, and the devil, to secure the triumph of God's glory in time and for all

eternity. His design is most noble, His enterprise truly unselfish and generous, worthy of the Being of infinite love and condescension who came to accomplish it. How precious a blessing it must be to know, love, and glorify God when the Son of God Himself, with the utmost readiness and earnestness of purpose, devoted the whole of His mortal life to cares, sorrows, and labours, summing them up in His Passion and Death, that He might secure so inestimable a blessing for us, and made Himself our model and companion in the path that leads to its attainment.[1]

Second Point.—Now, if the subjects of an earthly king could not refuse to obey and carry out his invitation, how much more worthy of consideration is it to see Christ our Lord, the Eternal King, standing in front of the entire world, and inviting all men, and each man in particular, saying to them: "My will is to conquer the whole world, and all My enemies, and then to enter into the glory of My Father. Whoever, therefore, desires to come with Me must labour with Me, in order that following Me in suffering, he may likewise follow Me in glory." How greatly, then, should we not only rejoice in being thus invited, but long most earnestly to be enrolled as Christians, and still more as Religious, that we may promote this glorious work in ourselves and others. In truth, all men of sound sense and reason, must resolve at least to offer themselves up without reserve to aid in so high an undertaking.

Third Point.—Our Blessed Lord's words of invitation are, however, addressed to another class of men, those, namely, who desire to distinguish and signalize themselves in rendering the highest kind of service to their Eternal King and Universal Lord. Such persons will not be contented with merely making a complete offering of themselves to praise, serve, and glorify God, but will present to God an offering of still greater value and completeness by making onslaught upon their own

[1] "It is a great glory to follow the Lord, for length of days shall be received from Him." (Ecclus. xxiii. 38.)

sensual inclinations, and on all carnal and worldly love, giving them no quarter until they are annihilated. The watchword of such is, death to all indulgence of the senses, death to all attachment to persons or things, except in and for my King's service, and death to the spirit and love of the world.

This and nothing short of this is the real spirit of a true Jesuit, embodied in the eleventh and twelfth rules of the "Summary of the Constitutions." In the same spirit we should conclude the meditation with the following declaration; "Eternal Lord of all things, with Thy favour and help I now make my oblation in the presence of Thy infinite goodness, and in the sight of Thy glorious Mother and of all the saints of the heavenly court, protesting that I wish and desire, and that it is my deliberate determination, provided only it be for Thy greater service and praise, to imitate Thee in bearing all kinds of insult and contumely, and complete poverty both in spirit and act, if Thy Divine Majesty be pleased to choose and receive me to this state and life."

End with the "Our Father."[1]

NOTE 1.—If we compare the words of this meditation with those in the Foundation, we see that while the latter requires from us only *indifference* as to riches, honour, pleasure, and all other things, and places us amongst those who have sound sense and are guided by right reason, the former prompts us by a holy ambition to go still further and to distinguish ourselves by a *practical hostility* to all these things, embracing their contraries, such as poverty, contempt, suffering, &c.

NOTE 2.—In the final oblation of ourselves we must observe that if we are in Religion, God in His goodness has already chosen us to that state, hence we only renew the offering which we have actually made, and offer ourselves, if He thinks well, to have our sincerity tested by fresh trials, provided He will give us grace to bear them.

[1] Conf. *Direct.* xviii. xix.

REPETITION OF THE ABOVE MEDITATION.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

The first and second preludes as in the preceding meditation.

Part 1.—*The allegory of an earthly king developed.*

First Point.—Let us imagine some Christian mediæval monarch, possessed of all legitimate authority, having a wide jurisdiction, and endowed with all the qualities that beseem one blessed by God—the piety of a David, the wisdom of a Solomon, and the sanctity of St. Louis. This king knows and loves each one, even the lowest of his people. How great would be the devotedness of subjects to a ruler so full of kindness and sympathy.

Second Point.—While such a prince invites the co-operation with him of all who are willing to join his standard, he will require no sacrifice of them which he has not himself already made. He places himself beside them, and shares with them in each one of their labours and trials, being himself their guide and example; whereas those who have refused to answer to his appeal, will remain entangled in the meshes of a lingering and miserable slavery, beneath a yoke of iron.

Third Point.—We have abundant examples of how wise and faithful subjects will volunteer gladly and readily to go and fight in the cause of king and country, even though they expose themselves to terrible dangers and hardships, have very little chance of promotion, but many of sickness and death, with no certainty of victory in the end.

Part 2.—*The application.*

First Point.—With how great certainty and variety of title Jesus Christ is most truly our King. His Kingdom is eternal, it is universal. He is truly and actually King, for He is such by nature,—all sovereignty rests in God, and comes from God. He is King by Divine right and birth, the only-begotten, consubstantial Son, and heir of all

things;[1] King by merit, having all kingly attributes;[2] king by election, with universal dominion;[3] a King infinite in power;[4] King by right of conquest;[5] a King who claims unlimited worship and adoration.[6]

Second Point.—The enemies against whom our King would enlist us are the world, the flesh, and the devil. St. Ignatius mentions sensual, carnal, and worldly love, because these are the three principal enemies of God's Kingdom within us, and, if these be conquered, the rest will be powerless against us. By sensual love we understand the pleasures and allurements of the senses; by carnal love, undue attachment to bodily comfort, to health, to the enjoyment of earthly life, together with a love for parents, relatives, and friends which is not purely spiritual; by worldly love, the setting of our hearts upon those things which the world loves, such as riches, honour, vainglory, display, &c. Our enterprise, then, is against spiritual enemies,[7] and so our warfare must be spiritual. And further, unless we overcome them in things which are lawful, they will easily drag us into unlawful excesses. It is to this combat and to this victory that Jesus Christ calls all Christians. Could any conditions be more just, more worthy, more admirable?

Third Point.—Let us further ask ourselves what should be our response to this call, considering the station we occupy, the claims upon us from the frequent forfeitures of His grace, which He has overlooked, and what the Church, and even the world itself expect from us? Surely we should at all times renew our attacks upon these enemies of ours as well as of our King, and be ever taking the aggressive against them. With reason would the angels and saints cry shame upon us, and if the world had knowledge enough, it too would despise us were we content with anything less.

Be careful to renew your offering as at the end of the last meditation.

[1] St. John i. 18. [2] Coloss. ii. 9, 10. [3] Psalm ii. 6, 8, 9; lxxi. 8.
[4] St. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. [5] Apoc. v. 9, 10.
[6] Psalm lxxi. 11. [7] Ephes. vi. 12.

A REPETITION OF "THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST."

(*For the use of Religious.*)

Our present object is to attain a more intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, because this cannot fail to fill us with so great an admiration of Him that we shall redouble our efforts to imitate Him and walk in His footsteps. It is this real knowledge of Him which constitutes the eternal life.[1] But alas! how rare has this knowledge become! Jesus is not thus known by many ecclesiastics or even by Religious. They are content to dwell with Him on the mountain and contemplate Him in His Transfiguration: they will abide with Him during the breaking of bread, but how few are brave enough to go and gaze at Him on Mount Calvary, and to drink of the chalice of which He drank?

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us picture our Lord before us, attractive in every feature, modest and lowly in His bearing. His clothing is poor but does not offend the eye, and a halo of majesty surrounds His head.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg from our heart that which we wish, namely, grace to understand thoroughly the nature of His invitation, to be most urgently moved to accept it, and to be led to a closer imitation of Him.

First Point.—Who is Jesus Christ? He is the King of our souls; by Him, as God, all things are made,[2] and He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.[3] In Him we all live, move, and have our being.[4] He is a Being of tremendous majesty.[5] Of His kingdom there is no end, and to Him the heavens and the earth are subject. As Man He is a King, to whom all power is given, and absolute dominion, and on His assumption

[1] St. John xvii. 3. [2] St. John i. 3. [3] Hebrews i. 3.
[4] Acts xvii. 28. [5] St. Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

of our nature the angelic hosts were bidden to adore Him. He also paid the price of our redemption and thus acquired possession of us wholly and entirely. In regard of His mortal life, He was prophesied of as a King who was to come, and He not only proved Himself to be a King by the manifestation of all kingly attributes, but He constantly spoke of His Church as a spiritual kingdom, He was openly accused by the Scribes and Pharisees of claiming to be a King; He acknowledged Himself before Pilate to be a King, and He was crucified as King of the Jews. Finally, before His tribunal as Supreme Judge every soul must appear at its separation from the body, and upon such as have been faithful to Him, He will bestow the crown of life.[1]

Second Point.—In what does the imitation of Christ consist? If we are to establish the Kingdom of God amongst us, we must mortify our own passions, must denounce self, may give no quarter to any inordinate attachment. It is not enough to contemplate the amiability of our Lord, and to dwell on His promises, we must practise in our own persons the abnegation which He preaches. We must never forget that "he who hates not father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, cannot be the disciple of Christ;"[2] and again, "Jesus said to His disciples: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."[3]

There are, of course, various degrees in the method of carrying out these lessons, but as regards that perfection which is required in a Religious, the renunciation must be absolute. Alas! how many give more licence to the love of their relations than those who have never left the world.

Third Point.—What reward may we hope to receive? The reward is the Kingdom of Heaven—a happiness unspeakable and eternal. But even in this life, Jesus sweetens our toils by the hundred-fold which He has promised. If we seek first the Kingdom of God, even

[1] Apoc. ii. 10. [2] St. Luke xiv. 26. [3] St. Matt. xvi. 24.

our temporal wants shall be abundantly provided for. Nor will God allow a hair of our heads to be hurt, or if He does, He will encourage us by His own example to love those very persecutions and sufferings which in the estimation of the world are most difficult to bear. And if to us the yoke of Christ seems hard, it is because we have only touched it with our finger. Let us seize it courageously, embrace it, and place it on our shoulder, and it will become sweet and easy to carry, nay, it will itself support and carry us.

Fourth Point.—The motives to be placed before us.—The first motive for giving ourselves up entirely and without reserve to this imitation of our Blessed Lord is that He has planned the way for us by His example, subjecting Himself in life and death to poverty, ignominy, and most bitter sufferings in order to gain for us this kingdom and glory, though already due to Him on so many titles. "It behoved Christ to suffer and so to enter into His glory."[1] How cheerfully then, should I, His servant, and a most miserable sinner, who for my disloyalty and frequent treasons richly deserve to be cast into Hell, now follow Him along the road He trod, and willingly undergo any hardships and pains for the same glorious end.

The second motive is that if I truly bear Him company in His sorrows and sufferings I shall certainly share with Him in His glory and in His Kingdom, provided "we so suffer with Him, as that we may be also glorified with Him."[2] Thus we see that all the advantages arising from this victory over our passions, over the world and the devil, will be our own gain, to be enjoyed by us throughout an endless eternity. If, therefore, we are guided by common sense at all, or have any regard for our own true welfare, we cannot but consecrate ourselves entirely and with all possible earnestness to a close imitation of our Lord.

End with the same act of oblation as in the preceding meditation, and with the "Our Father."

[1] St. Luke xxiv. 26. [2] Romans viii. 17.

We might in these repetitions add several other powerful considerations, that we may be inspired with still greater ardour in offering ourselves up to the service of our Eternal King.

(*a*) Such an oblation is right and becoming, for He has every claim upon us, by creation, conservation, dominion, sovereignty, and redemption. In respect of everything we have, we are absolutely dependent upon Him, and for each one of us He became Man and suffered on the Cross. He paid our ransom, and merited glory for us.[1]

(*β*) It will bring us a rich repayment, for it is both the only and the surest means of securing to us the liberty of the children of God. If we refuse to follow Christ we must inevitably become the slaves of His enemies, cut ourselves off from all peace of mind, and barter away our true glory for an eternity of foul disgrace. Undoubtedly the close imitation of Christ is hard at first, it is a yoke. It is hard to begin the way of the Lord, but, as the Holy Spirit assures us, "When thou shalt have entered, thy steps shall not be straitened, and when thou runnest, thou shalt not meet a stumbling-block;"[2] after which the secure hope of an infinite and eternal reward will make all smooth and easy to us. The example of the saints and the unction of divine grace will animate and strengthen us.

(*γ*) The imitation of Christ is absolutely necessary for us, considering that unless we follow faithfully in His footsteps we shall become the slaves of our own sordid passions, and victims of the vilest slavery.

(*δ*) The following of Christ is a great and glorious service; it is the real pathway to happiness on earth, trodden first by Christ Himself and then by the glorious choirs of confessors, virgins, martyrs, and doctors, by all who have been esteemed the best, wisest, and greatest of men. "It is great glory to follow the Lord, for length of days shall be received from Him."[3] It is also a crown

[1] "Forget not the kindness of thy surety, for He hath given His life for thee." (Ecclus. xxix. 19.)

[2] Prov. iv. 12. [3] Ecclus. xxiii. 38.

of glory to us hereafter in Heaven. "I reckon, that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."[1] "If we suffer we shall also reign with Him."[2]

THE INCARNATION.[3]

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Call to mind how, at sight of the human race perishing miserably in Hell by reason of sin, the Three Divine Persons decree that God the Son shall become Man for man's redemption; how in the fulness of time God sends the Archangel Gabriel to our Blessed Lady; and how, on her consenting to become the Mother of the Eternal Word, God the Son assumes human nature in her most pure womb.

Prelude 2.—Make in your mind a general survey of the condition of men upon earth at the time of the Incarnation, and fix your eye specially on the small house in which our Lady dwelt at Nazareth.

Prelude 3.—Beg an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ, who is about to become Man for us, in order that we may love Him more tenderly, and may follow Him more closely.

[1] Romans. viii. 18. [2] 2 Timothy ii. 12.

[3] "And in the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the Angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou amongst women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought within herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. . . . And Mary said to the Angel: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the Angel departed from her. (St. Luke i. 26—38.)

First Point.—The Message of the Angel.[1]—Our first parent had been created to the image and likeness of God, but that likeness had been lost. All other nations, except the Jews, were alike ignorant of the true God and of their origin from Him. Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome all were alike plunged in idolatry and in degrading vices; while the Eastern races, less skilled in art and letters, had also abandoned their earliest traditions regarding the worship of God and His marvellous works. These nations were divided by country, customs, interests, and mutual hatreds. They differed in language, colour, and features, contending one against the other in fierce battle or in private deeds of violence, while multitudes dragged on their lives in slavery. Those in power were carnal and selfish, the learned steeped in pride and mutual rivalry. Heads of families exercised the power of life and death over their children. The priests were idolaters and monstrous impostors. The poorer classes were trampled underfoot, and ready at any time to rise up against the rich. The whole race was born, lived, and died with God's wrath suspended over their heads—all were alike slaves of the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. Nor did their speech belie either their actions or their thoughts and desires. Their throats were open sepulchres, their mouth full of cursing and bitterness,[2] of vain boasting,[3] and of falsehood.[4] As to their occupations, many were votaries of pleasure, others sought only gain, they gave themselves up to quarrelling or to mutual indulgence, every day men were either dying, or being born, were either laughing, or weeping, &c. What a frightful sight for the eye of God, what hoarse and discordant sounds rose from the mouths of men to grate

[1] Thrice each day does Holy Church place this mystery before her faithful children, when she invites them to recite the *Angelus*.

Religious may very profitably select this triple devotion for renewing their vows of Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty, in the order here suggested.

[2] Psalm xii. 3. [3] Psalm xi. 3. [4] Psalm cxviii. 85.

upon His ears, no sign of supernatural life was left. "The Lord," says holy David,[1] "looked down from Heaven upon the sons of men—all had gone astray, and were unprofitable together; there was not one doing good, not even one." In His infinite compassion He resolves upon a remedy for this awful evil; not in fires from heaven to destroy His enemies, nor floods to drown them and their crimes and blasphemies, but in the coming of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity to assume man's nature, and to redeem and reinstate it. *Misericordia tua Domine plena est terra.*[2] Who then can have any love for this wicked world: this universe of misery, of sorrow, of hypocrisy, of selfishness and crime? How can we be thankful enough that God has called us out of it, out of its vanity and affliction of spirit! Let us rather learn from our God compassion for poor sinners, love of our enemies, how to return good for evil, even at the very time when men insult and outrage us, for this is the spirit of our Father who is in Heaven.

And, again, what would we ourselves, what would the world and humanity be, without Jesus Christ? Well, then, may we be inflamed with love towards Him by whom we possess all things.

But yet observe amidst earth's vast desert there was one oasis where dwelt a poor and humble Virgin, in a small cottage beside the mountain village of Nazareth in Galilee. She was consecrated to God and spent her life in sweet communion with Him, praying Him to speed the time of His coming. Sanctity dwells within her, breathes and rests upon her, and surrounds her; her soul even at the time of her conception was immaculate, and she corresponds most faithfully to every grace. Mary is the greatest, the only great being on the face of the earth, the only bright spot on which the eye of God can rest with pleasure. How truly are the great things of this world little, and the little things of earth great before His eyes.

Mark how Almighty God summons the Archangel Gabriel, and bids him carry to Mary the solemn com-

[1] Psalm lii. 3. [2] Psalm cxviii. 64.

mission from Him and wait for her assent. Let us learn from this how to obey promptly, thoroughly, and cheerfully, not considering whether the order be that we should minister to the poor or to rich, or whether it demeans or adds dignity to our position, and the like. When God's will is manifested by rightful authority we must, like the Angel, obey, *prompte, integre, et fortiter*. Sometimes we are carried away by jealousy if others receive greater gifts and honours than we do: as perhaps those belonging to other Religious Orders: or we bring ourselves to believe that the successes of others involve humiliation for ourselves, and so feel aggrieved at them. Let this be far from us. If only God is glorified, when or by whom, whether by friend or foe, by those who patronize us or by our rivals, then the rest matters not.

Second Point.—The Salutation of Mary.—Let us contemplate Mary as she kneels absorbed in prayer, when the Angel approaches and greets her by her name; declaring her to be "full of grace." How high an honour! what can the praise of all mankind together be when compared with that which she receives from the mouth of the Archangel. Then as he goes on to salute her as the most blessed of all women, she became troubled and wondered what manner of salutation this might be. We, on the contrary, are troubled when men do not praise us; flattering ourselves that their praises are only our due. How painful a contrast to the humility of Mary. The Angel proceeds to calm her fears and announces his wondrous commission. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall reign in the house of Jacob, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end."

Undazzled by the proposal, she reflects deeply before she speaks, and then expresses her difficulty. She has cut off her chance of becoming a mother by her solemn vow that she never will and never can know man. Mark her jealous love of holy purity and her readiness to reject the honour even of being Mother of God were that to

cost her her virginity. How solemn a lesson for us, and one that should fill us with confusion at so often and so heedlessly exposing this delicate virtue to the peril of being sullied. Only after the Angel has replied to her difficulty, does she give her full assent. But how often do we, when God asks some sacrifice of us, reply "How can that be? How can we overcome this repugnance of the flesh, this or that temptation?" Let us remember the words of the Archangel, "Nothing is impossible with God," and let us assure ourselves that in the strength of our faith, as the saints did, we too shall conquer, saying with the Apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me,"[1] not indeed of myself, but by the grace of God which will never be wanting to me.

Third Point.—Our Lady's reply to the Angelic Salutation.—How thrilling a moment of suspense preceded its utterance. As by the abuse of her free-will Eve fell, so by the right use of her free-will the second Eve must co-operate in our reinstatement.

What a moment of deliberation for Mary; because, as St. Augustine argues, she must have been allowed to forecast in prophetic vision what was to be involved in her becoming the Mother of God; and the panorama of her life of sorrows must have passed before her, ere she could give an intelligent answer. What a moment of suspense in the history of mankind and of the devils in Hell. As regards the former, the execution of the Divine plan for man's salvation depended on it; as to the latter, it was a question of their power being broken for ever, and by a second Eve in reparation for the sin of the first.

The import of Mary's answer. As a *fiat* created the world; and a subsequent *fiat* created the sacramental life; so Mary's *fiat* initiated the redemption of the world.

"And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me, as thou hast said." Oh! noble expression of sublime resignation and obedience. Her thoughts turn to the responsibility of her stupendous

[1] Philipp. iv. 13.

office, and neither to the honour nor dignity to which she was raised. In her profound humility she is aflame with Divine love. How full should we be of confusion that with all our misery we are so much the victims of pride and vanity, and are more taken up with the thoughts of honour than of duty. Here, too, Mary teaches us to humble ourselves under the Divine favours, and to make them an occasion of showing yet more heartfelt gratitude to God.

Fourth Point.—At the expression of Mary's consent, the Eternal Father consummated the mystery of the Incarnation, and with an act of infinite love, "gave His only-begotten Son" for the salvation of the world, "that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting."[1] Then did the Holy Spirit adapt the most pure womb for the dwelling-place of God made Man, and the Word descended and assumed in it our human flesh. *Et verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.* Oh, the ineffable goodness and condescension of the most august Trinity. Let us learn to return good for the evil done to us!

Immediately the angels crowd in adoration around their King, and are overwhelmed with amazement to contemplate Him thus uniting under the Divine Personality of the Word the two natures—the nature of God and the nature of man, the finite with the infinite!

Here we find our King giving us an example how we are to establish the Kingdom of His Father, by an astonishing act of humility and self-annihilation. "Emptying Himself, taking the form of a servant, formed in the likeness of men, and in the habit of a child of Adam,"[2] through the renunciation of His own will. "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not." "In the head of the Book it is written of me, that I should do Thy will; O my God, I have desired it and Thy law in the midst of my heart."[3] "And having joy set before Him, He endured the Cross, despising the shame,"[4]

[1] St. John iii. 16. [2] Philipp. ii. 7.
[3] Hebrews x. 5; Psalm xxxix. 7, 8. [4] Hebrews xii. 3.

thus taking the offensive against pleasure, honour, and sensual love. We, too, have pledged ourselves to follow Him in all this. With St. Peter we have engaged to go whithersoever He goes. Yet, alas, how often have we been guilty of falling short of this holocaust, of violating our engagements, and of refusing to learn the first lesson which He teaches us in this mystery of the Incarnation, self-abasement and sacrifice. Not once only, nor at the outset merely, but throughout all the days of His mortal life, from the rising of the sun to its down-setting, did He continue to inculcate it in the ever-adorable Sacrifice of the Mass, and in the Holy Eucharist, wherein this mystery of the Incarnation is continued, expanded, and applied to us: *Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum.*[1]

Let us conclude with a colloquy, praying of our Blessed Lady to obtain for us a practical knowledge, an abiding imitation of these virtues of our Lord, saying the "Hail Mary." Let us beg the same of our dear Lord, repeating with great fervour the *Anima Christi;* and finally, let us humbly and earnestly beseech the like grace from our Heavenly Father, and end with the *Pater noster.*

THE VISITATION OF OUR LADY.[2]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lady goes from Nazareth to Hebron on a visit of charity to her cousin Elizabeth. Upon her arrival the child whom Elizabeth was bearing leaped for joy, and his mother was filled with the Holy Ghost

[1] "He hath made a memorial of His wonderful works, the merciful and gracious God. He hath given food to them that fear Him." (Psalm cx. 4.)

[2] "And Mary rising up in those days went into the hill country with haste into a city of Juda. And entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

and exclaimed, "Blessed art thou amongst women;" to which our Lady replied in the words of the *Magnificat*. She remained with her cousin for three months until the birth of John, the Precursor of our Lord.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the way from Nazareth to Hebron, or it may be to Ain Karim; rough and uneven, over hills and through valleys; also the humble, peaceful cottage of Zachary.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we desire, which here will be to know our Blessed Lord, as mirrored to us in His Mother, that with her we may ever more and more increase in love of Him.

First Point.—Elizabeth welcomes the salutation of our Blessed Lady. No sooner did Mary learn by revelation that her cousin was with child, than she at once determined to go and visit her; not from any curiosity, restlessness, or desire of change, but in the spirit of charity which He infused into her whom she had just conceived by the Holy Ghost. After spending a few days in loving communion with God and in silent contemplation of the stupendous mystery of the Incarnation, she starts on her long and dreary journey. Let us accompany her, and observe her admirable modesty, recollection, and union with Jesus, her cheerfulness, peace, and absolute trust in the providence of God. Who would think that this poor and wearied-looking

And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for behold from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me; and holy is His Name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm, He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy. As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. And Mary abode with her for three months; and she returned to her own house." (St. Luke i. 39—56.)

maiden is no other than the Mother of God, the greatest and most exalted of those who have ever left their footprint on the earth since its creation! The first living tabernacle of the living God, attended on her journey by hosts of blessed spirits, as the object of their love and reverence! The Renowned Virgin, the Admirable Mother, the Seat of Wisdom, the future Cause of our true Joy! How little she thinks of her fatigue, of the cold comfort and inconveniences of the stations in which she rests at night! Her love and charity make all sacrifices light and pleasant to her! "Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it: if a man should give all his substance for love, he shall despise it as nothing."[1] Oh, how many lessons ought we to learn here from Mary in the journeys which we take; lessons of modesty, humility, recollection and union with Jesus, and of poverty: above all, readiness to undergo fatigue and every discomfort at the call of charity, especially in visiting the sick, helping others in their necessities or consoling those that are in sorrow or affliction. Let us consider how "all good things went with her."[2]

(*a*) St. John was sanctified in his mother's womb.

(*β*) Elizabeth received congratulations on her miraculous conception, and was waited on by a humble and cheerful handmaid.

(*γ*) Her child advanced wonderfully in grace through the presence of Jesus during the three months of Mary's visit.

(*δ*) The whole family drew great profit from the example of Mary's humility and charity in devoting herself to the humble duties of a domestic servant, as well as from the presence of the Son of God.

As soon as our Lady salutes Elizabeth, saying: "Peace be unto you," Jesus likewise salutes John, purifies him from original sin, endows him with the use of reason, and fills him with the Holy Spirit. John recognizes the interior voice of "the Lamb of God," and leaps for

[1] Cant. viii. 7. [2] Wisdom vii. 11.

joy; Elizabeth likewise becomes inspired by the Holy Ghost, and declares the presence of the Incarnate God, and the Divine Motherhood of Mary, saying, "Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb;" blessed, because chosen from amongst all women to be the Mother of the world's Redeemer; blessed, because the woman foreseen, foretold, and promised to us by the prophets; blessed, because in the fruit of thy womb, all mankind shall be blessed; blessed, because of thy faith that what the Lord hath said unto thee will undoubtedly come to pass. Then, conscious of her own unworthiness to receive so great a grace and favour from Heaven, she makes this public profession of her humility. "Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me."

Second Point.—Our Lady gives utterance to her glorious *Magnificat*. Let us listen to the words of inspiration in which she pours forth the devotion of her soul. She first ascribes each favour to its true source and origin, to the Author of all, to her God, who is alone worthy of all reverence and adoration; she renders to Him her admiration, praise, and love, declaring herself His humble handmaid, whilst acknowledging the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of God. Her spirit exults in God who is her Saviour, and at the same time her only Son; and this because He has, in His love, and without any merit of hers, looked graciously upon His lowly handmaid, on which account throughout all time, and in eternity, all generations shall proclaim her blessed. This they will do, on account of the great things which the Almighty hath wrought in her, through the mystery of the Incarnation and her consequent Divine Motherhood: decreeing her immaculate conception, filling her with all grace, and preserving her virginity intact.

Our Blessed Lady next proclaims the undying mercy of God which shall never be denied to them who love and fear to offend Him; while to such as think highly of themselves, whose hearts are puffed up with pride, like the haughty Scribes and Pharisees, the persecutors of

the Church, and to all those who reject her authority, He will manifest the strength of His avenging arm, and will drag them down from their seat of power, but those that are lowly He will exalt. Those that hunger and thirst after justice He will fill with good things, as we see verified in the Holy Eucharist, but the rebellious and proud shall be sent away empty.

In the third place she proclaims how God has fulfilled the promises made to the fathers of old, being mindful of His mercy, by sending down to Israel a Saviour, by whom they should be blessed, as He had promised to Abraham and his descendants.

Third Point.—Mary remained about three months, and then returned to her own house. She stayed for that length of time, that she might be a help to her cousin in the household duties, and also might be a supernatural assistance to her cousin, Zachary, and the child, through the presence of Jesus. Let us contemplate the daily life spent during those three months in the cottage of Zachary. Zachary continued deaf and dumb in consequence of the wavering of his faith at the announcement of Gabriel; Elizabeth was humble, modest, full of admiration, reverence, and awe, as she looked upon Mary and thought of the Child whom she was to bring forth. Mary always studying with humility and love how to be of service to both, carried pails of water from the well, or with active and loving devotion gave herself up to the menial duties of the house, deeming the lowest offices to be quite consistent with her high dignity. Thus in the school of Christ, true glory consists in the love of humiliations, in a spirit of self-denial, and in devotedness to works of charity. But in addition to these three, two others dwelt in that lowly cottage, invisible indeed to the outward sense, but still actively engaged there. Jesus the modest, loving Child of Mary, more active far than His Blessed Mother, was ever bestowing graces and blessings on His forerunner, who on his side co-operated with the graces that he received, and with profound humility and love ever manifested his

gratitude and devotion to the Divine Child, and paid to Him the adoration which of right belonged to Him as his God. With how great confusion should not we be filled, who are perhaps so favoured as to dwell under the same roof with Jesus, or at least possess Him dwelling in our churches, and within easy distance, yet rarely go to visit Him, although waiting in His great love for us, and ever desirous that we should come to Him, not for His sake indeed, but in order to give Him the opportunity of conferring His graces and blessings upon us. Let us bewail our want of faith, our ingratitude, and our blindness to our own interest, and resolve to amend.

In the colloquy let us address our Blessed Lady, begging of her to induce our dear Lord, through the power of her intercession, to come and fill our minds and hearts with a greater knowledge and love of Him, and let us say the "Hail Mary." Then ask our Lord as Man, to take up His abode in our hearts, saying the *Anima Christi;* and end with the "Our Father."

NOTE.—Between the mystery of the Incarnation and the Nativity there is a most touching mystery, that of Jesus dwelling for nine months in the womb of Mary. It is of this that the Church reminds us in her public supplications in the Litanies where we ask of God to hear us. *Per adventum tuum*—by Thy coming. It is a mystery full of useful lessons for us, lessons of humility and mortification, of observance of common life, of solitude and retirement.

THE NATIVITY.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall the history, how the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, in obedience to the edict of the Emperor Augustus, left Nazareth and repaired to

[1] "It came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. . . . And all went to be enrolled every one into his own city. And Joseph also went from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judæa, to the city of David,

Bethlehem, where, through want of better lodging, they retired to a cave, in which the Son of God was born, while angels came and sang His praises.

Prelude 2.—Let us, as if we were in the company of Mary and Joseph, picture the long, hilly road of about seventy miles by which they travelled, as well as the caravansary and cave, wherein our Lord was born.[1]

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that which we earnestly desire, namely, to know Jesus more clearly, to study His poverty, obedience, humility, and opposition to the world, that we may love Him more dearly and imitate Him more closely in these virtues.

First Point.—We should consider how the spirit of Jesus acted in reality upon the determination of Mary and Joseph, and how He inspired them with a resolution to obey the selfish and haughty order of the pagan prince. They lived in perfect harmony, forgetful of self, thoughtful only one for the other, doing each action, however trifling in itself, with perfect exactness as to the time and manner of performing it, and with a purity of intention, whereby they glorified God.

But their peace was rudely destroyed, for the Emperor, in order to flatter his pride and increase his revenue, enjoins a universal census, which required Joseph's

which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife who was with child. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger. . . . And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will." (St. Luke ii. 1—16.)

[1] In this contemplation St. Ignatius adds three things not mentioned by the Evangelists: namely, that our Lady rode to Jerusalem on an ass, that she was accompanied by a servant-girl, and that St. Joseph took also an ox with them. Such was the opinion of Toletus and Salmeron and others, but Fulgentius (*De laudibus Virginis*), St. Bernard, and Nicephorus (i. c. 12) are of a different opinion: Suarez inclines to the former opinion. As regards the ox, Bonaventure, Lyra, and a considerable number of the Fathers are of the opinion of St. Ignatius, and incline to the idea that Joseph sold it and with the price was enabled to pay the tribute-money and the expenses of the journey to, and of the stay in, Bethlehem. Our Saint asserts nothing positively, but simply states: *Ut pie meditari licet.*

presence at Bethlehem. Mary goes with him. Let us admire their perfect and cheerful resignation to the holy will of God, their confidence in His Divine protection, and their ready abandonment of their little home and the scanty conveniences of their humble cottage, taking only a few swathing-bands to bind round the Divine Infant, when born. These, together with an ass for Mary to ride, were all the preparations made to receive into the world the greatest and most glorious Being that the world has ever seen, the most August Personage in the world's history. Let us reflect on the troubles and fatigues of that long and wearisome journey, at the most trying season of the year, especially among the hills of Samaria. The only shelter at night was that afforded by the halting-places on the way, and their food probably was most scanty. Yet they are happy, because they have Jesus with them, are thinking of Him and breathing forth holy acts of love towards Him. Let us compare our thoughts with theirs, our recollection, humility, poverty, and union with Jesus, and be assured we shall find much that needs correction. Let us learn, above all, prompt and cheerful obedience to the orders of Superiors, being ready to leave country, friends, and every convenience, to undertake long and painful journeys, to face labours and hardships, and go whithersoever we may be sent, in order to fulfil the designs of God and to promote His greater glory.[1]

When at length they reach Bethlehem, let us accompany Mary and Joseph through the crowded streets. In vain he passes from door to door, seeing that there is no room for a couple so poor as the artisan and his spouse. Each time the door is shut upon him, his heart receives a fresh wound, for he feels the cruel blow it is to Mary. There is abundant room for his wealthier friends and relations, but none for the Son of God, none for the Queen of Heaven and earth. Learn how to value the esteem of men—blush to receive any consideration from those who treated and still treat Mary, Joseph, and Jesus

[1] Reg. 3, *Sum.*

so cruelly. At length, no roof being offered for their shelter, Joseph retires from the town to a khan or enclosed court, in one corner of which was a cave dug out of the face of a rock, which was used for the housing of cattle, and into this he conducts Mary and the ass. Let us contemplate the calm and cheerful courage with which they embrace suffering, humiliation, and contempt, and how imbued they are with the spirit of Him who is about to make His appearance as the great King and Captain of the elect. If we are to be instruments for the promotion of God's glory, we also must expect contempt and contradictions from the world; we must be content at least, if we do not rejoice, in humiliation and neglect, while others are held in regard; satisfied that they should receive the best whilst the worst shall fall to our lot—that they should be promoted to important offices, while we ourselves are overlooked.

Second Point.—Let us contemplate how, in the solemn stillness of the night, the *desired of all nations*—foretold four thousand years ago—the longed-for of the Patriarchs, the Redeemer of the world, the glory of the Father, is brought into the world by His Immaculate Mother, who, after adoring Him and giving Him a mother's kiss with utmost reverence, wraps Him up in poor swathing-bands and lays Him on straw in a manger, for want of a more befitting bed. Let us adore the Eternal One who is born in time, acknowledging Him who is Immense and Almighty in the small, helpless, trembling Child, the Impassible God now subject to the cold and pains and miseries of our nature, the Son of God become the son of man, that He may make mankind the sons of God. He embraces poverty in effect, self-denial, and humiliation, and out of free choice He prefers these to aught else. Oh, then, let us, with all the fervour of our souls, renew the offering which we have made of ourselves, and beg the grace to be preserved from ever showing hesitation or being guilty of violating our holocaust. Such is the spirit which should animate every true Religious. Of what avail is it to vow *poverty*,

to profess ourselves poor men, and yet refuse to feel the effects of poverty; to look for such comforts and conveniences in clothes, food, and lodging as are but rarely supplied to well-to-do people in the world, and for which, had we not been in Religion, we should have looked in vain? Or how can we hope to observe our *second vow* if, instead of embracing the hardships and mortifications of the Infant Jesus, we lead lives of ease and self-indulgence, avoiding all that is calculated to give pain, all that is laborious and hard to bear? How ill it would beseem us if we were tender and self-indulgent members of Him whose only bed and bedding was a rough board and a few handfuls of straw! Lastly, how could we practise *obedience*, and yet murmur or complain when anything is enjoined us of which we do not approve or which we consider repugnant to our feelings or unbecoming to our dignity or position? Oh! as we look upon this Babe of Bethlehem what a flood of thoughts rush in upon the mind and take possession of our heart! I can but fall down and adore. Mark well also the heartless ingratitude of the world. Jesus has come to be a Saviour, to be poor and despised, and to die, that men may become spiritually rich, reinstated in the position from which they had fallen, and that they may have life more abundantly and life in everlasting glory. He comes to His own, and yet His own will not receive Him.[1] He is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, but men prefer to remain in darkness. For ourselves, let us at least pray that He may shed the full blaze of His light on us, that we may detect the selfishness, heartlessness, and ingratitude of the world, so as to fly from it and break with it for ever, and that we may understand His beauty and nobility, His love and devotedness towards us, and may ever abide within that blessed light while on earth, nor change it but for the never-ending light in Heaven.

Third Point.—Let us consider the third and last part of this mystery, how Jesus is scarce born when angels

[1] St. John i. 11.

carry the tidings, not to the King of Judæa, to princes, or magistrates, but to poor, simple shepherds, telling them that the Saviour of the world is born, and that the sign whereby they are to know Him is that they shall find Him wrapt in swathing-clothes and laid in a manger. At the same moment the angelic hosts, in the fulness of their exultation, sang out, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will, announcing to men the infinite glory rendered to God in the sacrifice and humiliation of our Blessed Lord, who begins the struggle in which the powers of Hell shall be overthrown, man is to be redeemed, and peace with God shall be established for ever.

The sign, therefore, by which the Divine Infant shall be known is His extreme poverty, the entire absence of all human comfort or convenience, and the presence of countless humiliations and sufferings.

Now, it must be the same with us if we are to give true glory to God and to be ministers of peace to men. We must be stamped with His mark, *hoc vobis signum* —we must bear about us the obedience of Jesus, we must espouse poverty in spirit and in effect, we must inure ourselves to pain and hardships; we must eschew an easy life, the esteem of men, together with all vain show of our talents and abilities. Let us then at once give practical evidences of this truth, which in theory we have admitted and in which we profess to believe. End with a colloquy and with the "Our Father."

If time allows, the two preceding contemplations might be repeated twice over, insisting more particularly on those points which have struck us most forcibly, or which have caused us most consolation or desolation. Finally, it would help us to correct any bad use of the senses and perfect us in the right use of them, were we to make a careful contemplation of these two mysteries before proceeding to the one which follows.

ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall to mind the history: how an angel from Heaven appeared to some poor shepherds whilst they were keeping night-watch over their flocks, and announced to them the Birth of our Blessed Lord; how they hurried off at once to the outskirts of Bethlehem, where He had just been born: and how, after adoring the Divine Infant, they went back to their flocks, praising God for what they had seen.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit join the shepherds during their night-watch, and then accompany them to the cave.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg earnestly that we may know our dear Lord more intimately, may love Him more ardently, may listen to His call and may respond to it with greater devotedness and generosity.

First Point.—The Angel announces the mystery.

Whilst the Three Divine Persons were contemplating with infinite complacency the stupendous mystery wrought in the cave of Bethlehem; while the heavenly choirs were gathered around their King and Lord in profound adoration, filled with awe and wonder at the sight of His self-annihilation, in the excess of His love towards man-

[1] "And there were in the same country shepherds, watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an Angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the Angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign to you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will. . . . And the shepherds said one to another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that has come to pass, which the Lord hath showed to us. And they came with haste: and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger. . . . And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God, for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." (St. Luke ii. 8—20.)

kind, they for whom He thus "empties Himself" are too busy in the pursuit of earthly things, too much absorbed in the gratification of their senses, and the indulgence of their lawless passions, to interest themselves about Him. The greatest, the most portentous event which has occurred since the creation of the world, an event for which mankind had been looking forward, for which it had been sighing for four thousand years, awakened no interest in them. The thoughts, words, and actions of the men assembled at Bethlehem are regulated by one law, that of self-love, their views extend no further than this material world and the things of time. But the poor shepherds having no hopes, no prospects of wealth, or of worldly preferment, are strangers to earthly pleasures or sensual enjoyments, they are content to labour for their scanty pittance in their lowly and obscure calling. It is to them that the Almighty sends His Archangel to announce the good tidings that the Saviour is born. "He hath sent Me to preach good tidings to the poor."[1] Thus also is verified in their regard, what Jesus afterwards was to declare, "Blessed are the poor." Here, then, let us learn with how great zeal we ought to labour for the poor, who are so especially dear to our Blessed Lord, and how ready we should be at all times to comfort them, to encourage them in their sorrows, trials, and sufferings; to bring them that labour and are heavily burdened to their Saviour, that He may give peace and comfort to their souls.

But by what sign are the shepherds to recognize their Saviour? "You will find Him wrapped in swaddling-clothes and laid in a manger." The signs by which our Lord is to be known and the means also by which we are to find Him, are humility, poverty, at least in spirit, and mortification. He has come to establish a Kingdom whose principles are diametrically opposed to the principles of this world, which is ruled by the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.

[1] Isaias lxi. 1; St. Luke iv. 18.

He shall therefore be placed as a sign of contradiction, and have for His badge mortification, poverty, and humiliation. So, likewise, must all who would seek our Lord, and His service, be animated with His spirit. The great Apostle teaches the same: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God; but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness, and in habit found as a man. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death."[1] Let us contemplate these poor peasants: with what readiness and joy, with what humility and simple faith, they respond to the call of Heaven, leaving their flocks, and hastening to pay their homage and adoration to the new-born Saviour. Let us observe with how great reverence they fall down and adore their God, with what admiration they look upon our Lady; the awe with which their souls are filled as they relate to her the appearance of the Angel, and the words he had addressed to them. Mark the interest and delight of our Lady as she takes in every word of their simple story, how gently and respectfully she treats them! Let us also learn to treat with becoming respect the poor of Christ: let us be zealous in comforting and consoling them, especially by showing them where true joy and consolation are to be found, and by trying to bring them to our Saviour through our example as well as through our words. Let us convince ourselves that it is not by the way of comfort, of pleasure, of honour, or of display, leading as these do to destruction, but by poverty, in spirit at least, if not in effect, by a hardy and self-denying life, by a life of practical humility and simple faith, that we can hope to find our dear Lord.

Second Point.—The shepherds at the cave of Bethlehem.

No sooner had the Angel disappeared than the shepherds, trusting to Heaven for the protection of their flock, hastened towards Bethlehem to "see this thing

[1] Philipp. ii. 5—8.

that had come to pass." Their souls were filled with holy joy, with unhesitating faith and confidence, and they pressed forward in their anxiety to behold the Anointed, the Word of the Eternal Father, their Lord and Saviour. With solemn reverence they enter the cave! With awe and love they prostrate themselves in adoration! And let us consider, on the other hand, how lovingly the Infant Saviour welcomes them, and how with infinite generosity He rewards their faith and obedience by abundant graces, enlightens their mind with knowledge and inflames their hearts with love. When they had satisfied their devotion to the best of their power, they lost no time in returning to their charge, but on the way spoke together of what they had seen, praising God, so that all who heard them wondered at those things that were told them by the shepherds.[1] Oh! how sadly does our conduct contrast with that of these poor shepherds. We have this self-same Saviour lying in our tabernacles, though unrecognized by the world, and "emptying Himself" under the sacramental veil, out of love for us, anxious only that we should visit Him, give Him the opportunity of bestowing ever fresh proofs of His love by multiplying His graces in our minds and hearts. Alas! how seldom do we go to see Him! with what carelessness and irreverence do we present ourselves before Him! with what frivolity of mind and indifference of heart! and so tie His hands that He cannot bless us. May we not fear that instead of coming away from Him praising and thanking God, we have actually abused grace and added to our past ingratitude!

Third Point.—The shepherds return.

Let us in spirit follow the shepherds as they hurried back to resume the care of their flocks. No doubt they would willingly have remained with Jesus and Mary, in whose company they experienced intense peace, happiness, and joy: duty, however, compelled them to leave God for God, and they went away glorifying Him, loudly

[1] St. Luke ii. 18.

and eloquently singing His praises. They had learnt by their own experience that all good things had come to them together with Him: that though poor in earthly things, they were rich in heavenly gifts. Well might they glorify Him who so glorified them, and inflamed their souls with holy love for Him, and for His gentle and humble Mother. For our part, let us resolve to visit our Blessed Lord in the Holy Sacrament of His Love as frequently as we can, but it must be with the same dispositions as those of the shepherds; with a lively faith, with profound reverence, and with fervent charity. Let us see that we are earnest and recollected in His holy presence, and remain with Him till duty calls us elsewhere; then only will we leave God for God. Then we shall be sure to imitate the shepherds, by glorifying and praising God for the graces which He will bestow upon us each time that we visit Him. It is by this means also that we shall inspire others with an earnest appreciation of His goodness, and so draw them to visit Jesus in a spirit of true devotion.

Finally, enter into colloquy with our Lady and our Blessed Lord.

End with the "Our Father."

THE CIRCUMCISION.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us briefly recall the history, how when Jesus was eight days old, He was subjected to the painful rite of circumcision, probably performed by St. Joseph, and how His name was then assigned to Him, after which He was placed, thus wounded, in the arms of His Holy Mother.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the

[1] "And after eight days were accomplished, that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the Angel before He was conceived in the womb." (St. Luke ii. 21.)

lodging of Joseph and Mary, together with the invited guests.

Prelude 3.—We will beg earnestly to know our dear Lord, as He shows Himself to us in this mystery, that we may love Him more fondly, and thus may follow Him more closely, even unto blood, if such be His good pleasure in our regard.

First Point.—They circumcised the Child Jesus.

This painful ceremony was ordained by God for a two-fold purpose: first that Abraham and his posterity might be distinguished from the pagans and all that were not of the people of God; secondly, as a sacred rite for the remission of original sin. Now as Jesus did not incur the stain of original sin, but, being the Son of God, and conceived by the Holy Ghost, was invested with infinite sanctity, He lay under no obligation to subject Himself to this legal ceremonial. Yet for our sake and to set us an example, He submitted Himself to it as a work of supererogation.

His object was, adds St. Thomas, to convince the world that He did actually belong to the race of Abraham, give to us an example of obedience, and set His divine sanction to the law. Further, when He came He had accepted the burden of the law, as St. Paul declared: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."[1] Another reason may be added, namely, that the devil, the enemy of our Lord, might not discover, before the appointed time, the Divine origin of Jesus.

Lastly, He voluntarily subjected Himself to it in order to teach us a lesson of humility; for whereas there could be no sin in Him, who was the source of all sinlessness and sanctity, He took upon Him our iniquities, and even when only eight days old became the great sin-offering: "Him, that knew no sin, for us hath He made sin, that we might be made the justice of God, in Him."[2]

[1] Galat. iv. 4, 5. [2] 2 Cor. v. 21.

O my soul, let us learn from our blood-stained Infant Saviour what His love for us has cost Him; and ask, what has been our return? How much have we done, or what sacrifices have we made, to show our gratitude? We have professed our love, but what proofs have we hitherto given of the sincerity of these professions? Let us be filled with confusion at our past ingratitude, and beg grace to follow the example of our Lord in a true sacrifice of self.

Second Point.—He was called Jesus.

This name was given to Him by God Himself, as we read in St. Luke: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus;"[1] these being the terms in which the messenger of God, the Archangel Gabriel, addressed our Blessed Lady. In similar words the heavenly messenger addressed St. Joseph: "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins."[2] The reason why He is called Jesus is because He came to save His people from their sins. By sin man had forfeited all spiritual gifts and graces, which God, in first creating him, had superadded to the requirements of human nature, such as original justice and sanctifying grace, as also the preternatural gifts of immunity from sickness and death, together with freedom from concupiscence. But by sin man fell from his high estate, forfeited his honour, incurred the enmity of his God and Creator, and by his disobedience lost all claim to supernatural life. Out of His infinite love and mercy the only Son of God came down from Heaven to redeem mankind and reinstate them in the position from which they had fallen through the prevarication of our first parents. He came to restore to them the rich inheritance which, as far as they were concerned, they had hopelessly lost, to re-establish them in the grace and friendship of God,

[1] St. Luke i. 31. [2] St. Matt. i. 20, 21.

their Creator and Lord, and finally to restore to them that supernatural life of which by sin they had been robbed. Thus under a three-fold title He would be our Saviour, He would be thrice a Jesus to us. To effect this He adopted our human nature, and in that nature He assumed our poverty, that thereby He might repurchase for us the incomparable treasures which we had forfeited; He "emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant," in order that He might reinstate us in the high and glorious dignity from which we had fallen, by making us the true sons of God, and co-heirs with Him to everlasting glory: and to restore to us our spiritual life He would voluntarily shed His Blood and die upon a cross. In all these respects He is a Jesus to each of us, as far as He Himself is concerned, but He requires our co-operation, and that "we fill up what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in our flesh,"[1] by detachment from earthly goods, by contempt for the empty honour and glory of the world, in imitation of Jesus, and by a spirit of self-denial and mortification. When we see Jesus as an Infant of eight days old, unhonoured, patient, suffering, and bleeding for us, let us again humble ourselves profoundly, and renew our promise, with His grace, to imitate Him more closely for the time to come.

Third Point.—They gave back the Child to His Mother.

This is not stated by any of the Evangelists: but our common sense dictates its truth. What must have been the feelings of that noblest, most loving of mothers when she received into her arms her bleeding Infant! With what intense tenderness did she press Him to her breast! Truly might she say, "My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands,"[2] for He was stainless as the lily, yet He is ruddy by the Blood which He has shed; His form as of Libanus, excellent as the cedars: He is all lovely: such is her beloved. On the other hand, who can conceive the immeasurable graces which Jesus poured into the soul of His loving and sorrowing Mother? Who

[1] Coloss. i. 24. [2] Cant. v. 10.

could press a glowing fire to his breast and not feel its heat? And Mary held the Heart of Jesus to her own, that Heart which glowed with an infinite love.

At the same time, her soul is wounded and filled with keen compassion at the sight of her suffering Child, anticipating, as in a few weeks she will hear from the prophetic Simeon, that her soul should be pierced through with sorrow, when not part only but His whole Blood shall be poured out for us. Let us learn betimes that in embracing the call of our King and Captain we likewise must make up our minds for trials and sufferings: "Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin."[1] In the colloquy let us address our Lady, begging of her to pray to our Lord that He would vouchsafe to grant us the spirit of courage and loyalty to Him under sufferings, and say the "Hail Mary." Then let us beg the same of our dear Lord, and renew our offering as directed in "The Kingdom of Christ." Lastly, let us ask of our Heavenly Father grace to persevere in our resolution, and finish with the *Pater noster*.

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.[2]

NOTE.—With regard to this mystery, although its existence is a matter of faith, yet all the circumstances attending it are very uncertain. In the first place, who the Magi were, whether philosophers, astrologers, or kings, is uncertain. Whether they came from Arabia Felix, or from Persia, or from different lands, is again

[1] 1 St. Peter iv. 1.

[2] "When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda in the days of King Herod, behold, there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to adore Him. And King Herod hearing this was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda,

uncertain. Their exact number is also unknown to us, although the more general opinion is that there were only three. Lastly, the nature of the star is matter of dispute, as also the time of its appearance. According to some it continued visible to the Wise Men whilst they journeyed to Jerusalem, then was hidden from their view until they left that city for Bethlehem, whilst others suppose that it appeared to them only to announce the birth of our Lord, and again to point out the place in which He was born.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us call to mind how the three Wise Men dwelling in Eastern lands saw as it were a brilliant star in the western heavens, and inspired by God recognized it as the fulfilment of Balaam's prophecy regarding the birth of the Messiah; how they without delay set out on their long journey to go and pay Him homage, present gifts to Him, and adore Him; how in Jerusalem they inquired after the place of His birth, and under the guidance of the star at length found Him in Bethlehem. There they presented to Him the gifts which they had brought with them: gold, frankincense, and myrrh; they adored Him, and then hastened back by another route to the country from which they had come.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit imagine the long and arduous way to Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and the

for so it is written by the prophet. . . . Then Herod privately calling the Wise Men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them; and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him. Who having heard the King, went their way; and behold the star, which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was. And seeing the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary His Mother, and falling down they adored Him; and opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in their sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country." (St. Matt. ii. 1—12.)

[1] See Suarez, *De vita Christi*, q. xxxvi. a. 1—8.

dwelling in which the Infant Saviour was being nursed by His Blessed Mother and guarded by St. Joseph.

Prelude 3.—Let us pray that we too may imitate the zeal, courage, and self-sacrifice of the Wise Men, that with them we too may know our dear Lord and His spirit more clearly, that we may thereby love Him more dearly, and may embrace His Divine call more perfectly.

First Point.—Amongst all those millions who beheld the strange sight in the heavens, who were filled with wonder at it, and who for a time made inquiries about it, then quickly ceased to speak or think of it, there were only three who, responding to the proffered grace of God, determined to follow whither it pointed, recognizing it as the announcement of the birth of the Divine Saviour. They at once proceed to carry out their resolve—they leave their homes, their friends, they face the difficulties and hardships of a long and weary journey, they expose themselves to the many dangers that beset them on their way, and to the ridicule or pity of their countrymen.

How often must they have been tempted to abandon their design, to regard it as a hopeless search, how often would they have been wearied and discouraged and inclined to condemn their inconsiderate undertaking, yet they persevere and, aided by the grace of Him who has called them, they faithfully and bravely resist the temptations by which they are assailed. Oh! let us admire their constancy, their cheerful resignation to the trials that beset them, and their unshaken confidence in God. In Jerusalem, they boldly inquire where the new King is to be found, they do not hesitate to proclaim the object of their coming, they wish to find Him that they may adore Him. They trample on all promptings of human respect; they care not what Herod may say or do against them, nor what his courtiers or subjects may think of them. They ask, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews: we have seen His star in the East and have come to adore Him." Why did not God cause the star again to appear to them? He would thus save them from this new trial, would prevent the alarm and indigna-

tion of Herod, and would save the children of Bethlehem from slaughter. It was that thereby He might expose the guilty blindness and ignorance of the Jews; might force them to give testimony regarding the birthplace of the Infant Saviour, might furnish the Wise Men with an occasion of showing their faith, constancy, and courage, might expose the futility of the cunning or craftiness of the cruel tyrant, against the Lord and against His Anointed; and also make manifest the depraved and perverse disposition of the Jewish people. Let us here compare our conduct with that of these Wise Men. We admire them for the sacrifices which they made, the labours which they underwent in order to have the blessing of being with Jesus and seeing Him for a few days: what shall we say of ourselves who so often refuse to go a few steps to see Him: and when we visit Him, where is the faith, love, reverence, and humility in adoring Him, which we see in these pagan sages! How much more closely do we imitate the shameful conduct of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who in their stupid ingratitude showed no concern at the birth of their King and Saviour, and through cowardice or human respect feared to acknowledge Him.

Let us also learn to combat our predominant passion, when we see in the instance of Herod to what length and to what fearful excesses it is calculated to lead us, if it be not subdued. Dominated by the unbridled spirit of ambition to which he was a slave, he does not hesitate to imbrue his hands in the blood of innocent children, and foolishly to attempt to frustrate the designs of an all-wise and Almighty Providence. Let us learn too to repose in peace and confidence in the arms of Him who is ever watching over us, and will not permit harm to befall us unless it be for our good.

Second Point.—They adore Him and present their gifts.

Let us contemplate the Wise Men as they enter the humble dwelling. With what awe, reverence, and devotion do they prostrate themselves before the Divine Infant,

whom they behold so poor, so lowly, and ignored by all! But with what a clear light were their souls enlightened by Him "who is the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world." What a fire of love did He enkindle in their souls, and with what infinite generosity did He repay them for all the labours they had undergone, for all the sacrifices they had made in order to come and see and adore Him! Let us admire their faith, humility, love, and joy, as they silently worshipped Him. Then they present to Him gold in recognition of His royal sovereignty, as Lord and King of all things, they offer up frankincense in acknowledgment of His Divinity, and they give to Him myrrh in testimony of His human nature,[1] by these bearing testimony to the Divine inspiration which they had received. What offerings do we present when we go to visit Jesus? Alas! too often we go empty handed, or empty headed, being so distracted or pre-occupied as hardly to think of Him, or speak to Him at all. Henceforth, when we approach His Sacred Presence, let us humbly present to Him the gold of a heart inflamed with holy charity, the frankincense of a mind recollected in prayer and inspired with solid devotion, the myrrh of self-denial and interior mortification. Or, if we are privileged by being called to religious life, let us when we visit our dear Lord in His tabernacle renew our vow of poverty which to Jesus is more precious than gold, our vow of obedience which is more pleasant to Him than the most sweet-smelling incense, and our vow of chastity which is dearer to Him far than myrrh.

Third Point.—They return to their country.

When they were about to return to their own country, Almighty God sends His Angel to admonish them not to pass through Jerusalem or to revisit Herod, but to go back by another way to their home. In a spirit of simple unquestioning faith, relying entirely on the loving providence of God, they hasten to obey. Though the way

[1] These offerings were selected by Divine inspiration, to testify that in Christ was royal power, Divine Majesty, and human mortality. (Glossa.)

is longer, beset with difficulties and fresh dangers, they are happy to carry out the Divine will. Let us admire the great transformation effected in them; the modesty and recollection of their conduct, their peace and holy joy, their burning love of Jesus, their humility, detachment, and contempt for the world. Let us listen to their words of praise and glory to God, and let us blush to think how far we, who see Jesus so often, are from imitating their example. Oh! would to God that each time we visit Jesus, each time we receive Him in Holy Communion, we came from it by another way, more humble, more recollected, more mortified, more detached from earth, more attached to our Jesus.

End with a triple colloquy. "Our Father."

If time and circumstances permit, it would be well to make a second repetition of the two preceding contemplations, and an application of the senses in the evening as usual.

ON THE PURIFICATION OF MARY AND PRESENTATION OF JESUS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us remember how Holy Mary, forty days after bringing forth her Son, went to the Temple, as prescribed by the Law, to be purified and to present

[1] "And after the days of her purification, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord . . . and to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. And behold there was a man named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was in him. . . . And he came by the Spirit into the Temple. And when His parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him according to the custom of the Law, he also took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said: Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant in peace, according to Thy word: because my eyes have seen Thy salvation. . . . And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His Mother: Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted, and thy own soul a sword shall pierce." (St. Luke ii. 22—36.)

her little Child to God. There she met with the holy old man Simeon, who takes the Infant in his arms and prophesies His future Passion; and with Anna, a devout widow, who points Him out to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel, as the long-desired Messiah.

Prelude 2.—Let us visit in spirit the Temple and witness what is passing there.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg more intimate knowledge of our Lord and of the lessons He gives us in this mystery, that we may love Him more dearly and follow Him more closely.

First Point.—Admire the wonderful spirit of supererogation exhibited by our Lady in going up to the Temple to be purified. "After the days of her purification, according to the Law of Moses, they carried Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." But the Son of God could not be subject to this enactment, being superior to the Law; yet though superior according to His *nature*, He chose to subject Himself to its authority for our example. So was it with Mary. She had no need of purification, for her spotless virginity had incurred no blemish in bringing forth her God, and there was no stain upon her soul of original sin, from which, as faith teaches us, she was exempt. But she, like her Son, was imbued with the spirit of *sacrifice*. Their example should confound our pride and teach us humility—it is a reproach to our sloth and to our attempts to evade the law, by neglecting our spiritual duties on the slightest and most frivolous pretexts. We are sinners, and yet we are ashamed to appear what we are, and postpone the application of the means of obtaining forgiveness. Jesus subjected Himself to circumcision, and Mary to purification. At the sight of this two-fold example, all our unworthy pretexts for avoiding humiliations fall to the ground. Let us admire their modesty and recollection, and the happiness felt by Mary and Joseph when travelling the six miles to Jerusalem, because they have their Jesus with them—He is the one object of their thoughts

and of their affections. And as they enter the precincts of the Temple, what intense recollection and composure is manifested in their every movement and gesture. How different from our conduct when we enter into God's holy Presence. Let us see the Mother on her knees, holding up her Child in offering to God. What a lesson for us, with what devotion should we offer up Jesus Christ to His Eternal Father when we receive Him in Communion or make oblation of Him in the Mass. See with what humble reverence she receives the prescribed blessing, and learn to imitate her spirit of faith, interior recollection, and fidelity in fulfilling our smallest spiritual duties.

Second Point.—Simeon receives Jesus in his arms.—Long has he been waiting with unabated confidence for this blessed occasion; spending his days in the Temple in watching and prayer, just and fearing God, and looking for the consolation of Israel; the Holy Ghost dwelling in him. With what care do we strive to acquire and preserve the grace of God? Do we love watching and prayer, do we regularly visit the temple where Jesus is ever present, that we may go and commune with Him? How do we fly from faults and negligences which expose us to the danger of forfeiting or diminishing actual graces? Or do we not rather look for the consolation of pleasure, and seek our own and not the things of Jesus Christ, and thus become imbued, not with the Holy Spirit, but with the spirit of the world? Let us see with what profound faith, reverence, love, and confidence the holy man presses Jesus to his breast. Oh! what a reproach is he to our coldness, distractions, and hardness when we receive Jesus into our breast in Holy Communion or touch Him in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass! Simeon holds Him once, and we, oh! how often! After that he could die contented, and alas! we are far from content to die. Then comes the prophecy: "He is placed as a sign of contradiction." So too are all who belong to Christ; they shall all bear His livery and share His fate. And so shall His Mystical Body verify till the

end, as it has done for nineteen hundred years, this prophecy of her Divine Spouse.

And Anna, though eighty-four years old, left not the Temple, but spent her nights and days in fasting and prayer, and she was pure, and mortified, and faithful in the service of God. Therefore God was pleased to reward her by the sight of our Blessed Lord. It is to such that God manifests Himself, and it is because the number of these is small that so few are allowed to see Him intimately.

Oh! how incomparably greater are the graces which we have received, and yet how tongue-tied are we in praising God and urging forward His interests, whereas she went about pointing Him out to all.

Third Point.—Jesus is presented to His Father.—With what thoroughness does our Blessed Lord offer up His Sacred Humanity to carry out the will of His Father. He offers up every thought of His mind, every movement of His Heart, every sense, and nerve, and action of His Body to promote that Father's glory, and to establish and extend His Kingdom. He will continue to do this in the midst of labours, humiliations, persecutions, and death itself. He will do this without respite or cessation; nay, according as He advances in years, so will the completeness and perfection of His offering become intensified. Let us reflect all this upon ourselves, contrasting the miserable failures and imperfections of our imitation of Him in the offering we have hitherto made of ourselves. Let the thought fill us with confusion, and in the earnestness of our heartfelt gratitude that He has not even yet cast us off, let us resolve to be more faithful in future.

In your colloquy, entreat the Blessed Virgin to present you to her Divine Son, and to pray for you that you may keep faithfully this holy resolution, and repeat the "Hail Mary." Renew your offering of yourself to Jesus, and beg of Him to obtain the like grace for you, saying the *Anima Christi;* finally present the same petition to God in Heaven, concluding with the "Our Father."

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.[1]

NOTE.—Although in this contemplation the obedience of our Blessed Lord is put strongly before us for our consideration, still, the points selected intimate to us that the chief virtue we have to study is resignation to the will of God in the trials of this life. This mystery also reveals to us the first opposition between the working out of God's design and the exercise of public authority in the time and the country in which He is born.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us reflect how Mary and Joseph at the bidding of the Angel bear the Child Jesus into Egypt, thus escaping from the hands of Herod,[2] who seeks to take away His life.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the long, weary road to Egypt, and the cottage on the Nile near Heliopolis, where there was a settlement of Jews.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we have at heart, namely, to know our Blessed Lord more clearly in this mystery, that we may love Him more dearly and follow Him more closely, in His obedience and cheerful resignation under the trials and persecutions of this life.

First Point.—If we contemplate the Holy Family in their house at Bethlehem we shall find them modest, poor, industrious, anticipating each other in kind thoughts and charitable actions, full of love towards the Blessed Infant. To the world outside He is a sign of contradiction, as His parents also are, while "all those who wish to live

[1] "And after they were departed, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and fly into Egypt: and be there until I shall tell thee: for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him. Who arose and took the Child and His Mother by night, and retired into Egypt: and He was there until the death of Herod." (St. Matt. ii. 13, 14.)

[2] St. Matt. ii. 13, 18.

piously in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution."[1] The world, being the enemy of peace, will not allow the good to enjoy it long. Meantime, let us learn from Mary and Joseph that true sanctity and happiness consist in performing indeed the ordinary duties of our state, but in doing them extraordinarily well. When we turn to Jerusalem, to the palace of Herod, we find all there a sink of luxury and effeminacy, adulation and cunning, deceit, cruelty, and falsehood. Herod, himself inflamed with rage, and a prey to the predominant passion of worldly ambition, plans the massacre of the innocent children, at the suggestion of his fawning courtiers. But in vain does he endeavour to frustrate the designs of God, "for the Lord shall laugh at him,"[2] seeing that "the souls of the just are in the hands of God and the malice of men shall not touch them."[3] Mark here the extravagant folly of man in striving against the designs of God's providence; well assured that in all our trials and persecutions we have but to place ourselves entirely under the protection of Him who will not permit a hair to fall from our head without His special permission.

If we return to the cottage at Bethlehem, where Mary and the Divine Infant and holy Joseph are reposing in peaceful slumber, we find God commissioning the Archangel to notify His will. "For behold the Angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in his sleep and bids him take the Child and His Mother and fly to Egypt." Strange that He who is come to be the Liberator and Redeemer of the world should fly, as if incapable of saving Himself! and thus forego an opportunity of manifesting His own and His Father's power, and of promoting thereby His Father's glory. Again, He is to make His way during the darkness of the night towards Egypt—into a far-distant country—to undertake a journey on foot of one hundred and eighty miles and dwell in a land most hostile to His nation. Every direction given seems to argue the unreasonableness of such a step, for might they not so easily have found shelter amongst their countrymen

[1] 2 Timothy iii. 12. [2] Psalm ii. 4. [3] Wisdom iii. 1; Prov. xxi. 30.

in the hilly parts of Galilee? Joseph, however, listens not to such thoughts as these, but awakens Mary, who obedient to his word at once rises, and together with the Child, they start under cover of the darkness upon their way. No murmur escapes their lips, no anxiety or regret disturbs their perfect calm, their ready and cheerful resignation to God's holy will. Let us learn from their example to leave in the hands of our Superiors, who are in the place of God to us, the disposal of ourselves and of our affairs as they shall deem fit, carrying out their orders even though to human ideas they may apparently involve humiliation, want of sympathy with others, and actual unkindness, and may in the judgment of many appear to be unreasonable and foolish. Mary and Joseph do not even inquire how long they are to stay in exile, but make up their minds to remain till they shall be told when they are to return. How grand a lesson for those who are tempted to grow weary of office or place, and to petition for change.

Second Point.—Our Lord's parents proceed on their journey into Egypt. Let us admire their prompt and blind obedience, notwithstanding the age of the Holy Child, the delicacy of the Mother, the inclemency of the season, the poor provision they have been able to make, their entire ignorance of the road, of the nature of the country, or of the resources whence they are to draw their support. Their whole reliance is placed on the providence of God, who has given them the order which they are obeying. Let us accompany them in spirit as they pass through Hebron and the hilly parts of Judæa to Beersheba, and onwards to Gaza, and then through the land of Goschen to the banks of the Nile. Often they hunger and thirst during the day, and at night have no roof but the vault of heaven to shelter them; always wearied and worn with their long travelling, yet preserving the same cheerfulness and resignation, the same unwavering confidence in God, the same recollection and union with Him in prayer, and in their adoration and love towards the Divine Infant. He, at the same time,

offers Himself to all this suffering, and joyfully accepts it for our sakes, whilst He imparts interior grace to Mary and Joseph, enabling them to bear each trial with joy and so give glory to His Heavenly Father. Let us in like manner take Jesus with us in our journeys from place to place, and He will have the same care of us, no matter how hard or repugnant the trial may be to which obedience subjects us. Often that which appears to us to be cruel, imprudent, and even foolish, is actually the will of God manifested to us through Superiors.

Third Point.—Mary and Joseph dwelt in Egypt until Herod's death. The Egyptians were plunged in loathsome idolatry, while the country was a cradle of every kind of superstition, and a veritable sink of corruption; but nevertheless, as a return for its hospitality in harbouring the Saviour of the world, how wondrous a spectacle did that country present in the early days of the Church! Its deserts blossomed as a beautiful garden in the sight of Heaven, and its schools became fruitful in learned and glorious saints. It remains for us to spread the good seed of our prayers and holy example in the midst of a depraved and perverse generation, that when we are gone the seed thus sown may germinate and produce similar fruits in generations yet unborn.

Let us in our colloquy bewail our want of resignation to the will of God in the comparative light trials which we have had to suffer, as well as our imperfect obedience to those appointed over us. And let us beg, through the intercession of Mary and Jesus, that we may, for the time to come, perfectly conform ourselves to the pattern which He has set. End with the "Our Father."

Where time and circumstances allow, and when a whole month is devoted to making the Exercises, St. Ignatius enjoins two repetitions of the preceding meditations, and in the evening an application of the senses to the same subject.

THE RETURN FROM EGYPT.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—On the death of Herod an Angel was sent by God to St. Joseph to announce the fact to him, and to intimate that he should now return to the land of Israel. St. Joseph at once obeyed, and set out for Judæa; but whilst on the way he receives a second message from Heaven, and goes in consequence to Nazareth of Galilee, where he takes up his abode.[2]

Prelude 2.—Let us join the Holy Family in Egypt, and in spirit accompany them on their journey to Nazareth.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg of our Lord that He will manifest Himself in this mystery still more clearly, and so draw us through love and admiration of Him to follow Him more perfectly.

First Point.—The Angel brings word to Joseph that it is the will of God he should return. Herod was dead; he died as he had lived, steeped in iniquity. He had imbrued his hands in the blood of a wife and three children, had put many others to death, and among them the Holy Innocents. Again, through his gross immorality and profligacy, his body had become a prey to the most loathsome diseases, an object of loathing and disgust to himself and to all around him, and he at last

[1] "But when Herod was dead; behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel. For they are dead that sought the life of the Child. Who arose and took the Child, and His Mother, and came into the land of Israel. But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judæa in the room of Herod, his father, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned in sleep retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming he dwelt in a city called Nazareth." (St. Matt. ii. 19—23.)

[2] How long the Holy Family remained in Egypt we do not know, as the opinions of the Fathers differ on the point. Some with Epiphanius fix the period at two years, while others, amongst whom are Ammonius, Anselm, &c., suppose it to have been seven years. Others extend the term of their exile to nine years.

breathed out his soul in the darkness of despair, amid tortures that drove him to attempt death by his own hand. What then had pride profited him? What good had ambition, his worldly power, and his thirst for glory done him? while his excesses only made him an object of horror to his subjects and sank him deeper in the abyss of eternal misery. Truly, *mors peccatoris pessima*—"the death of the sinner is very evil."[1] But let us turn from this revolting sight to the humble dwelling of Joseph and Mary in Egypt. There all is peace, mutual self-sacrifice, humility, and love; all is happiness and joy, for Jesus is there, with whom dwelleth every good thing. The Angel awakens Joseph, the humblest member of the family, but yet its acknowledged Superior, and bids him to arise promptly. He obeys. He is to take "the Child"!—such being the terms in which the humble Jesus is referred to by His own messenger—and "His Mother;" the Queen of Heaven, the most perfect of women, the Mother of God, "and go back to the land of Israel." At the bidding of the Angel, without further question, they carry this out at once; Mary and Jesus obey Joseph, who in all humility and confidence accepts the message of God from the lips of the heavenly envoy. Let us take to heart the lesson here given us of true supernatural obedience. Whether we are Religious, and as such bound by vow, or whether we are in the world, we are all called upon to obey; yet how few really appreciate the nature and excellence of this duty! how few obey the commands of rightfully constituted authority, not for the sake of him who commands, nor because of his superior qualities, nor for the benefits accruing therefrom, nor to avoid the evils of disobedience, but purely and simply because they recognize in that authority the representative of God. It is such obedience alone that is meritorious in the sight of God, such alone is consistent with true liberty and Christian independence. But what is the motive of our obedience? Do we recognize in the orders which we receive the expression of the will

[1] Psalm xxxiii. 22.

of God, or are we actuated by the less worthy motives of gaining temporal advantages or of escaping evils, or do we obey simply because we must? Such motives as these are unworthy of a true follower of Jesus Christ.

Second Point.—And rising up, they came into the land of Israel. As it was by obedience that they went into Egypt, so by obedience did they return from it. They were perfectly indifferent to all but the will of God. There was no question with them of like or dislike, of comfort or discomfort, of health or sickness, of credit or discredit, but simply of what the will of God was, of what conduced most to His glory and praise. It should be thus with every Christian, but especially with those who are in the religious state, and most of all with those who bear the name of Jesus, and profess to glory in it. To such all countries, all residences, all appointments and offices are equally agreeable, provided the constituted authority has spoken, and thereby manifested God's holy will. It is only in this complete abandonment of ourselves to Superiors that the soul secures true peace, feels assured of the protection of Divine Providence, promotes its own sanctification, and advances the greater glory of God. Let us in spirit accompany the Holy Family on their homeward journey, learning from each member of it lessons of modesty, recollection, humility, patience, charity, and cheerful resignation to the holy will of God.

Third Point.—Joseph passes on to Nazareth. There is a deep meaning in the message given to St. Joseph by the Angel when he bade him return to the land of Israel. Naturally the Saint would conclude that he ought to go and dwell in Jerusalem, in the neighbourhood of the Temple, which the Divine Child could visit and commune with His Heavenly Father. Moreover, he would wish to go thither in order to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving for the protection of Heaven during their exile in Egypt. Yet, since Archelaus, the cruel son of the late tyrant, was now reigning in Judæa, and St. Joseph felt uncertain to what part of the land he should direct his steps, he had recourse to prayer that he might discover the will of

God. How often do we not form our judgments simply as feeling prompts us, or in contrast to this, as suggested by our own narrow and mistaken views, or through a love for creature comforts, or desire for advancement in life, or other temporal and unworthy motives, without turning to God, and begging light and guidance from Him. It is precisely in order to guard us against this common fault and danger that St. Ignatius proposes to us, and lays such stress upon the frequent application of the "Methods of Election." If we combine earnest prayer with the right use of reason, God, in His merciful and loving providence, will enlighten us to know His will, as He did His servant, holy Joseph, of whom it is written "that he was admonished in his sleep," and withdrew into Galilee, where he took up his abode in Nazareth. This was a retired and humble village in which, far removed from the turmoil and dissipation of the world, the Blessed Mother of Jesus had dwelt, in which Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and where for so many years our Lord was to lead a life of obscurity, of labour, and of obedience. "Love to be unknown and to be accounted as nothing worth," says the author of the *Imitation*. Such is the lesson he learnt from Jesus of Nazareth. Let us also try to take this lesson to heart; let us practise what we profess, and love to live a life of labour, obscurity, obedience, and prayer.

Let us end this contemplation with three colloquies, to our Blessed Lady, to our dear Lord, and to our Heavenly Father. End with the "Our Father."

THE HIDDEN LIFE.[1]

Observe that in the preceding mysteries we have studied those more remote dispositions whereby we should incite ourselves and others to greater zeal in seeking the glory of God. We now come to the more

[1] "And He descended with them and came to Nazareth; and He was subject to them. . . . And Jesus advanced in wisdom, age, and grace before God and men." (St. Luke ii. 51, 52.)

immediate dispositions, leading to the same end; and first of these is the sanctification of our souls in our own private lives. For this we must study the life which Jesus led until the thirtieth year of His age, when He went forth to preach and to accomplish the redemption of the world. It is a mystery hidden indeed from the eyes of worldlings, but shining out with wonderful lustre before the eyes of all who really know and love Him.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us review the history, how our Saviour in the twelfth year of His age, returned to Nazareth and lived there in perfect obedience and subjection to Mary and Joseph; and, as He advanced in age, so did He ever show greater wisdom and sanctity in works of edification to His neighbour and of glory to His Father, while following the trade of a carpenter.[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the house and shop which they occupied, and imagine we see our Blessed Lady and her Divine Son employed in menial and ordinary services.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg for light to know our Lord in His private life more clearly, that we may love Him more tenderly, and may imitate Him in His private virtues more closely.

First Point.—Jesus was *obedient*. There, day after day, and at all hours, we see our Lord in that poor home full of respect and subjection to our Lady and St. Joseph—always ready to their call, content with everything, and serving them in everything with the most perfect obedience. And who is this that obeys? The Almighty Creator, Lord and Master, to whom all things are subject: and who is, as Man, full of grace and wisdom and power. Whom does He obey? Mary, whom of His own free choice He had fixed upon to be His Mother, and also Joseph, a poor artisan, both raised out of a very humble position by Himself, and infinitely inferior to Him in wisdom, power, and every other quality.

[1] Conf. *Summa*, p. 3. q. 7. a. 12; Toletus, in Lucam ii. §§ 86, 88.

In what does He obey? His obedience extends to the very poorest and lowliest duties with perfect alacrity and fulness of affection, and that until His thirtieth year. So the first step in the way of sanctity is perfect obedience and a total detachment from our own will and judgment, thinking nothing of any talents that we may have—that we are aged, or learned, or prudent—or perhaps have held high office. Nay, we must tread under foot our own opinions and judgments; and like Jesus, readily subject our own wishes and ideas to those of others. How painful it is to hear a Religious sometimes asking: "What! am I, forsooth, a child? or a fool? Have I not gone through such and such studies? Have I not filled such and such offices?" And yet we profess to imitate, especially in the matter of obedience, that Jesus whose life was for eighteen years summed up in the words *Erat subditus illis*. Let us listen to St. Bernard: "Blush, thou proud sinner; God humbles Himself, and thou exaltest thyself." Let us resolve firmly to obey with an obedience like that which the Son of God not only showed so eminently in all His actions, but made the chief occupation of the greater part of His whole life; for when He left His Mother's side, it was only that He might centre His obedience all the more on His Heavenly Father.

Let us, too, contemplate St. Joseph in his carpenter's shop, clad in his poor working clothes, and labouring hard to earn the few necessaries required by Mary and Jesus; as also the Mother and Child, poor, but peaceful and happy: each ever ready to help and sacrifice self in favour of the others. Joseph holy because humble, Mary more holy because more humble, but Jesus the holiest of all because the most humble, and so successful in concealing His Divinity, that the most intimate of their neighbours failed to discover it. Truly He is a hidden God—and all this for a space of so many long years. Oh, let us love to be hidden with Christ in God.

Second Point.—Jesus advanced in wisdom, age, and grace. It was not that the *habit* of wisdom and grace increased, for these were perfect in Him from the instant

of His conception, but that His actions manifested more and more the wisdom that was in Him, and each gave greater delight to God. His Divine Person was clothed with human flesh, and hidden within the obscurity of His private life, as the sun is behind the clouds, and only now and then and by degrees shone forth with greater splendour as His years advanced. Let us behold Him in the discharge of His ordinary actions; adoring and glorifying His Eternal Father in His prolonged prayer, in His conversation and intercourse with men; in His service to His Blessed Mother; in His meals and in His rest—let us regard in all these the modesty of His exterior deportment, the humility, thoughtfulness, and charity of His bearing. Let us ourselves, too, desire to render a more and more perfect service to God in the daily actions of our ordinary lives, and to aim always at what is more perfect both as to the substance and manner of performing them. Alas! how often have we ignored or reversed this principle in our lives! What efforts have we not made to increase in wisdom, in study, or perhaps, in the applause and esteem which we obtain from others; and in doing this how many wrong notions and crooked maxims have we not adopted, how poor have been our little attempts to please God by our virtuous deeds. Let us humble ourselves, repent heartily, and resolve courageously to act more wisely for the future.

Third Point.—"Is He not a carpenter?" Jesus having taught us how to found the spiritual life on the practice of obedience and to persevere until we have acquired it, next teaches us the surest means of preserving this spirit by humility and the constant exercise of humiliations. Jesus came to perform the greatest of all works, the redemption of the world; He determined for this end to dwell on earth for three-and-thirty years, yet thirty of these He spent in retirement, and eighteen out of these in a small joiner's shop, as if He were a mere peasant, engaged solely with the hard labours of an ordinary mechanic, like one who possessed no learning. Therefore was the question cast in His teeth: "Is He

not a carpenter?" How different are the judgments of God from those of men; and yet how often do we, who profess to imitate Him, prove ourselves cowards and slaves to the opinions of men. Such was the beginning of the noble achievement, such the preparation of Jesus to glorify His Father, by humbling Himself and making Himself as nothing. Wherefore we but prove our own folly and ignorance when we wish to appear in public, to make a show, to occupy conspicuous posts, &c.

Let us also consider well how Jesus, who had come to accomplish so mighty a work by His teaching as the redemption of mankind, chose to spend thirty years in poverty, obscurity, and laborious employments befitting only a poor carpenter's son. This He did in order to convince the world of the necessity and superior excellence of holy humility; to encourage and console those who are forced to work; to ennoble manual labour; and, lastly, to convince us that real merit does not depend so much on the nature of our occupations, as on the purity of intention and the spirit in which we perform them.

Let us then attach ourselves to the interior and hidden life, and love the lowest offices and the occupations least esteemed by worldlings.

In our colloquy, let us implore of God to give us the grace to walk in the footsteps of our Blessed Lord, especially by imitating His obedience and humility, and by our fervour in performing the ordinary duties of our state of life. End with the "Our Father."

JESUS REMAINS IN THE TEMPLE.[1]

NOTE.—1. In the preamble to the consideration of the different states of life, St. Ignatius tells us that this contemplation is to prepare us for the main and decisive

[1] "And His parents went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the Pasch. And when He was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem: and

work of the second part of the Exercises. And Toletus[1] says that, according to the opinion of commentators, this mystery is the commencement of that life which Jesus was publicly to lead as the Saviour of the world and promoter of His Father's glory. It ought, then, to dispose us to make greater and more perfect resolutions against all carnal attachments.

2. After Jesus has been presented to us at Nazareth as a model of obedience, humility, labour, and fidelity in the discharge of ordinary duties, we here regard Him as the model of Christian perfection. Further, evangelical perfection, or the practice of the Evangelical Counsels and the consecrating of self with our liberty and will to the apostolic life, is one end proposed to us for our serious consideration; but yet it is not the predominant one, which is rather, as St. Ignatius asserts, *Ut perveniamus ad perfectionem in quocumque statu*, that is, to put ourselves in the disposition to acquire perfection in *any* state, and to excite our will to follow the call of God at all cost, and to adopt the means necessary to acquire that perfection.

3. Therefore the mystery is presented to us under the three following points: (1) Jesus is called by the Eternal Father to quit His Mother, to manifest Himself personally in the Temple, at the expense of great pain both to His Mother and Himself, in recognition of His Father's superior claims; (2) Jesus obeys perfectly, under the most painful circumstances resulting from His poverty, detachment, &c.; (3) in the third point we are to ask ourselves, What is God's call in our own individual regard?

His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors. . . . And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. . . . And His Mother said to Him, Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them, How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (St. Luke ii. 41—49.)

[1] In Lucam ii. § 69.

Prelude 1.—Let us consider that Jesus went up with His parents to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the Passover; that when they returned, He remained without their knowledge; that having with intense sorrow and anxiety sought Him, they at length found Him on the third day in the midst of the doctors in the Temple; and that when His Mother asked Him why He had acted thus, He answered: "Why did ye seek Me? Did ye not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine we see the road to Jerusalem, the Temple, and our Lord along with others standing in front of the doctors.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we desire so much to obtain, namely, to know our Blessed Lord's thorough and generous response to the call of His Father, that we may love Him the more, and be stimulated to follow Him more faithfully.

First Point.—Jesus, having attained the age at which He assumes the rights of manhood and becomes subject to the Mosaic injunctions, sets out with His parents for Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Easter by assisting at the sacrifices and other ceremonies prescribed for the honour and worship of God. The way from Nazareth was long, passing through Esdraelon, the valleys of Ephraim, over the hills of Samaria, and through Sichem on to Jerusalem. Jesus is of very tender age, and the way is rough and hilly, besides which He runs some risk of His life, as Archelaus was still reigning in Jerusalem,[1] yet He reckons nothing of the trouble, fatigue, and danger, preferring the reverence and fear of God to every human consideration.[2] Let us admire the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph with Jesus in their midst as they proceed on their way: their humility, modesty, gentleness—how content they are to be ignored and perhaps looked down upon by their fellow-pilgrims on account of their poverty, humble appearance, and retiring manners. With what deep feelings is the Heart of Jesus stirred in regard of His most Holy Mother, and of St. Joseph, their pure,

[1] Toletus, § 68. [2] St. Aug. *De consens. Evang.* ii. c. 10.

loving, and devoted protector; and on the other side, with how ardent a love, and profound reverence and awe were not their hearts filled towards the Divine Jesus! Again, what was their food, their accommodation, on that three-days' journey?—yet they bore it all so cheerfully, so silently, so generously, for it was on the part of Jesus and of Mary an act of perfect voluntary mortification, since Joseph alone was bound under obedience to the Law. How much have we to learn in these respects, and how little room is there for supererogation in all that we do for God! During these seven days let us behold him engaged in the Temple adoring and praising God and praying for the salvation of mankind. Let us here learn to cling perseveringly to our spiritual duties, if we mean to do good to others and glorify God. Our talents, industry, and labours will all be of little use to others, if by negligence in prayer and spiritual observances we fail to sanctify ourselves. Let us never make irksomeness, small ailments, the preparation of sermons or acts of charity to our neighbours, an excuse for neglecting our religious duties, especially our meditation and examens of conscience, and other daily devotions.

We may also contemplate the example of recollection, composure, and modesty, which the Holy Family gave during all the ceremonies of the Temple, as well as their exactness in fulfilling the minutest details of the Law, and thus learn from them the manner in which we should conduct ourselves in the house of God, and more especially when preparing for, celebrating, or returning thanks after the participation of the sacraments, or Sacrifice of the Mass. When the feast was over and the parents of Jesus in company with the other pilgrims from Galilee started for their homes, Jesus remained behind. This act caused intense pain to His Sacred Heart, as He knew the dreadful grief and sorrow which it must cause to the most tender and loving heart of His Blessed Mother, yet He could not tell her, for it was by this her trial that her most pure soul was to be rendered more pure and more beautiful still, and that her natural love

was to give fuller place to the supernatural with which she was inflamed. His pain was intensified by the love in which He regarded her; yet such was the will of His Eternal Father, that thereby He might teach the world a higher and a nobler law than that which, as the Author of Nature, He has implanted in the soul of every man, and in compliance with which the natural law must be sacrificed. It is a lesson which respects parents as well as children, that when God calls to His special service, the natural ties binding them to each other must be broken, and thè sacrifice must be made even though it may cause the heart to bleed.

Second Point.—Jesus obeys most cheerfully. He remains in the Temple, and mixing with the strangers who were receiving instructions from the doctors, listens to their teaching as if He were an ignorant scholar. We may well suppose that He would ask them regarding the Messiah, and thereby prepare the doctors and scribes for acknowledging Him when He should enter later on His Public Ministry. So full indeed of heavenly wisdom were His questions and replies, that all were rapt in admiration. Let us learn with a like humility, modesty, and attention, and in the same purity of intention, those sacred truths, which may fit us to be instruments for the promotion of God's glory and the salvation of souls, and may serve specially to sanctify ourselves also. Instead of spending our time in making visits, paying compliments, and joining in worldly and unprofitable conversation, let us be covetous of it and devote it to serious study, after allowing a full measure to prayer. The Doctors wondered at the heavenly prudence and wisdom manifested by Jesus. God grant that the people with whom we may be thrown, may never have cause to wonder at the imprudence, rashness, and folly of our talk, or at our want of zeal and piety. But how was Jesus supported during those three days? Probably on charity. Where did He pass the night? Either in the porch or portico of the Temple, or perhaps He craved the hospitality of others. The daytime He probably spent in the house

of God, fully assured "that all other things would be added unto Him."

Third Point.—When Joseph and Mary had completed the first day of their return journey to Nazareth, they found that Jesus was absent, and was not in the company of any of their relatives or friends. For this no blame could be attached to them, whether of indifference, neglect, or want of love: yet who can conceive the anguish and sorrow of Mary and Joseph, or at the same time their humble submission to the Divine will. We may apply to Mary in her distress those words of the spouse in the Canticles: "By night I sought Him whom my soul loveth: I sought Him and I found Him not. I will arise and go about the city; in the streets and the broad ways, I will seek Him whom my soul loveth. I sought Him and found Him not. The watchmen who keep the city found me: have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?"[1] Let us accompany Mary and Joseph on their way back to Jerusalem in search of Jesus: let us feel intense compassion for them, for the poor Mother in her calm but deep sorrow at the loss of her Child, in her terrible affliction and unmerited self-reproaches for her imagined want of care and watchfulness; sympathizing too with holy Joseph in his grief when he saw the distress of Mary, and in his own anxiety about Jesus. Truly "great as the sea is their sorrow. Who can heal it?" And thus the slow hours of that sad day passed. What a lesson this should be for us when through our own fault we have had the terrible misfortune to lose Jesus by a grievous sin, or have gone to a distance from Him by a deliberate venial sin. If they in their sorrow hastened to seek for Him whom without a shadow of fault they had lost for a time, what ought to be our affliction, what our haste to seek Him, and to continue to seek Him till He is found again?

When they reach the city, they make their way straight to the Temple, where they find Him seated in the midst of the doctors. Let us contemplate Him there

[1] Cant. iii. 1—3.

as with sublime modesty, humility, and reverence He proposes His questions regarding the Messiah, the time and the signs of His coming, and listens to their replies. Let us observe how all those about Him, as well as the priests and doctors, are struck with wonder and admiration at His questions and at His answers. Let us admire the self-control of His Mother, and her patience, whilst she waits till her Son be at liberty, and let us rejoice with her at "having found Him whom her soul loveth, whom she will now hold, and will not let Him go till she brings Him into her mother's house."[1] When Mary asks Him why He has treated them so, and describes how sorrowingly they have been looking for Him, He gives them to understand that in regard of His works done for the glory of His Father, in His office as Saviour of the world, He was bound to obey that Father. Let us never forget this reply of our dear Lord, let us remember that we must trample underfoot all human respect, all regard for flesh and blood, when there is question of God's glory and the salvation of souls. At the call of duty we must be ready to forsake parents and family and our best and most intimate friends, even though they may be disgusted with us and made hostile to us. Our answer should be equally unhesitating: Do you not know that I must be about my Father's business? Jesus had two kinds of work to do, which we may call *opera sua* and *opera Patris*.[2] The former were such as fell more especially within His capacity as Man, avoiding in them all singularity, and as long as He lived with Mary, subjecting Himself in them to her will. But the latter were peculiar to Him in His quality of Saviour, and belonged rather to His Divinity; as to these He waited solely on the will and pleasure of His Father, and could not subject Himself to the will and pleasure of any human being how holy or exalted

[1] Cant. iii. 4.

[2] In the distinction of *opera sua* and *opera Patris*, we refer to those actions of our Lord which He performed as Man, and in which it was the will of His Father that He should be obedient to His fellow-men, as distinguished from those which were solely and directly ordained by His Heavenly Father.

soever, or how closely allied to Him.[1] By this He teaches us that we too must make a like distinction in our own lives. Civility, good-nature, and charity are very good and proper dispositions towards winning the hearts of our neighbours, and it is well in ordinary life and common matters to endeavour to please them, if neither God nor our neighbour's salvation demand otherwise. But when our own perfection, the will of God, or His glory are in question, these works being more than human and requiring a special and actual grace from God, may not be made to depend on human influences, but must ignore the judgments or preferences, the pleasure or displeasure of men.

Let us examine ourselves and see how far we have regulated our lives according to the principles laid down by our dear Lord.

In the colloquy let us beg of Him to teach us these true principles of the apostolic life, and give us grace to reduce them to practice in our daily lives. End with the "Our Father."

PREFACE TO OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE VARIOUS STATES OF LIFE.

1. After meditating on the example of the first of these states, consisting in the observances of the Commandments of God and of the Church, which Christ our Lord left us whilst He was living under the authority of Mary and Joseph; as also on that which He gave us of the second state, the observance of the Evangelical Counsels, when He remained in the Temple, having severed His direct connection with His Mother and His adopted father in order to devote Himself solely to the service of His Eternal Father, let us now begin to contemplate the further mysteries of His Life, in order to study and discover in what state or kind of life His Divine Majesty may be pleased to employ us for His service, or what

[1] Toletus, in Lucam ii. § 69.

sacrifice He requires from us for our greater perfection in the state in which He has placed us.

As an introduction, therefore, to this subject, we shall consider in our next exercise the ways and means according to which Christ our Lord seeks to influence us, and on the other hand those employed by the enemy of our human nature: and from them we shall learn how we ought to dispose ourselves for acquiring perfection in that state to which it may please God our Lord to elect us, or for confirming ourselves in that state to which we are already committed.

2. Suarez[1] observes: "St. Ignatius here begins to treat of the means by which a man ought gradually to dispose himself to make a right election of that state of life in which he may best secure his salvation and serve his God."

3. The meditations themselves are calculated to guide the exercitant to the practice of perfection, whatever may be his state of life, whether he be a member of the Society, or a cleric, or even a lay person living in the world; hence we see that St. Ignatius does not make distinct mention of the Evangelical Counsels in them.

4. Where there is no question of choosing a state of life, if the person has already made his election, the same exercises can and ought to be applied to the correction of some sin or irregular condition of the soul, or to find out what sacrifice God demands from him for the sanctification of his own soul or the promotion of God's greater glory; or what particular virtue he is more especially called upon to cultivate. It is upon one or other of these subjects that those who make the Spiritual Exercises at regular stated intervals are called upon to make their election, according to the disposition of the soul at the time of the retreat.[2]

[1] *De Exercit.* lib. ix. c. v. n. 28. [2] See Appendices I. II. III.

ON THE TWO STANDARDS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us put before our minds how Jesus Christ calls all men, inviting them to gather round His standard; while Lucifer, on the contrary, cunningly strives to draw them under his galling yoke.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves a wide plain round about Jerusalem, where the Commander-in-Chief, (*Summus Dux generalis*), Christ our Lord, is stationed in the midst of His elect; another plain stretches out near Babylon, where Lucifer places himself at the head of our enemies, the devils and depraved and evil-minded men.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we earnestly desire, namely, a clear knowledge of the wiles and deceits of the impious rebel against God, that we may beware of them; and at the same time a knowledge of that interior life to which our true and Divine Leader invites us, along with grace to follow in His footsteps and embrace His principles.

First Point.—We should study the character of the hosts marshalled round Babylon, a city in appearance indeed, noble and imposing, but in reality a centre of disorder, riot, and confusion; seeing that its inhabitants are the slaves of vice, and disown the true worship of God. There, seated as on a throne of majesty, is Lucifer, lording it over the sons of pride.[2] He stirs to its very depth that spirit of pride which inspires all his followers, and spreads the pestilence of every vice over the whole earth. He is surrounded by flaming fires whence rise dense volumes of smoke, fitting symbols of concupiscence and falsehood, and of the inconstancy and restlessness

[1] This meditation together with the "Foundation," "The Kingdom of Christ," the "Three Classes," and "Three Degrees of Humility," form the very soul of the Spiritual Exercises. Towards them the others tend and depend on them, and hence they should never be omitted. The exercises on Sin and the contemplation of Divine Love are also to be added.

[2] "He beholdeth every high thing, he is king over all the children of pride." (Job xli. 25.)

of unbridled passions. All is agitation and excitement, as unreal as it is unsubstantial, all is empty show and bravado, all is falsehood and hollow deception. If we could see the monster in his true colours, we should die of fear and horror—he strikes his adherents with terror and holds them in chains of slavery. As regards the good, he would fain drag them from the path of virtue and plunge them into vice, drive them to despair by persecution, paralyze their action by anxieties, fears, and scruples, or bewilder and distress them with wild imaginings. His pride and envy infuriate him against mankind. Let us now observe how his minions from Hell, joined by multitudes of his adherents on the earth, hustle round the well-disposed, all ready to carry out the commands of their infamous head, all imbued with his impious and cruel malice, and all yearning to have a share in the ruin of poor souls. Amongst the most desperate are those who, under the guise of men of science, of statesmen, of rulers, or of leaders of society, exercise their baneful influence. Such as these the arch-fiend despatches over the whole face of the earth; they are scattered through cities and towns and hamlets; they mingle with the crowds to be found in public places or in manufactories; they enter private houses, they are encountered where men fly for solitude; in the workshop, the office, and the school. No single child of man can evade the assaults of these enemies, whether visible or invisible.

Let us listen to the directions which Lucifer gives them. They are to attack covertly, and strive to allure their victims by objects in themselves indifferent, such as riches,[1] inspiring an undue appreciation and desire of them; they are then to draw men on gradually to boast of and take a vain conceit in them, that from this they may fall into the abyss of pride and so end in bringing ruin upon themselves.

Money is pronounced to be a necessity, requisite for

[1] According to the sense intended in the consideration on the Principle or Foundation.

any hard times that may come, or for supplying the needs of the family; besides which men ought to ambition the improvement of their social position. Again, by it they will be able to do so much good, to gain respect and influence, and thereby promote the interests of society and even of religion.

Thus from love of money they will be lured on to love of honour and esteem, from which the spirit of pride is but one step further, and pride is declared to be the origin of all the sins committed.[1]

Should this first plan fail because the end seems hopeless or at least too remote, the second plan seeks to inspire the victim of temptation with an inordinate appreciation of his imagined intellectual powers, and thus induce him to strain every nerve to develop these at the sacrifice of other duties of greater moment. This effort breeds self-confidence and obstinacy in one's own opinions, no matter how shallow the foundation on which they are based, contempt also for the authority and opinions of others. By this means a man becomes the slave of pride and a victim of destruction.

But as the great majority of mankind are not to be lured by either of these wiles of the enemy, he will have recourse to a grosser stratagem still, one more in accord with our lower nature, I mean the quality of physical or corporal beauty. By instilling into men and women a high esteem for the grace of external form, and inducing them to spare no pains to enhance it, they will the more easily be led to take complacency in themselves and to court the notice and admiration of others; to indulge in thoughts of vanity till they are filled with pride, and from pride in personal attractions the way lies open to every depth of degradation here, and to Hell hereafter.

Alas! with how great ardour, perverseness, and cunning, do they not discharge their dreadful commission; like fierce lions and ravenous wolves they roam

[1] "For pride is the beginning of all sin: he that holdeth it shall be filled with maledictions, and it shall ruin him in the end." (Ecclus. x. 15.)

through the world and through places the most holy in order to prey upon souls, masking their infernal designs until they have entrapped their victims.

We are bound to detest treachery so diabolical, and to be filled with horror at the sight of multitudes of poor deluded souls ruined for all eternity through their attachment to such vile creatures, and through their own pride and self-esteem. Has the devil succeeded even with ourselves in this his first lie? Or do we spurn the love of money and of those things especially which money can purchase, for promoting self-ease, our love of novelties, of superfluities, luxuries, and the like? Have we an undue esteem of our mental talents and natural gifts, and in order to cultivate these do we forego our prayers and other religious duties, or shorten the time we give to them? Do we sit in judgment on those who differ from us and perhaps condemn them because they do not, we fancy, appreciate us as they ought? Finally, do we belong to that vast and sensual class of men who attach importance to and make the most of their personal attractions and bodily gifts, whereby to attract the notice and admiration of others? If so, then let us take heed, for we are within reach of our fall, and we have been tampering with him who is our own enemy as well as the enemy of our Captain and our King.

Second Point.—Let us, from a sight so repulsive, turn to Jerusalem, the city of peace, and in some imaginary plain there let us contemplate a far different Leader and the company which follow Him. We see the Leader Himself of the elect, seated in lowly majesty, beautiful above all the children of men. Ingenuousness marks His every feature; there is a gentleness, loveliness, tenderness, in His every word, every look, and every action. Authority and power belong to Him of right, and are possessed by Him in an infinite degree. The very atmosphere which He breathes is one of peace. So too all is peace and happiness and order amongst those who rally round Him, all have learned from Him to be meek and

humble of heart.[1] He is a model to them of mortification and self-conquest and of universal detachment from earthly things, and He has inspired them with that life which He came from Heaven to impart. He is the Way itself, the Truth itself, and the Life itself;[2] in Him all virtues are united. Let us see how this Lord of the universe chooses His Apostles and disciples, and gives them commission to spread themselves throughout the whole world that they may teach His blessed truths and principles amongst all classes and conditions of men; for in His infinite goodness and mercy, and without any gain to Himself, He wishes all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.[3] He wishes to illuminate all with the light of the truth.[4] For this too He commissions the angels in Heaven. All are bound together by the bonds of love to carry out His merciful and loving design, "that the world may be saved by Him." And the commission which He gives to them is this. They are to help Him in inducing men to embrace spiritual poverty, and actual poverty also, when He is pleased to choose them to that: and next to desire opprobrium and contempt, from which they will learn humility. They will thus fly from riches, will avoid the snares of worldly honour, and will renounce all pride, and so acquire all other virtues.

With these weapons He would have us fight against the devil and triumph over His and our enemies, till we come to lead a life like His and afterwards enter into His everlasting Kingdom, thus securing the end He had in view. After pondering over His invitation and reflecting from whom it comes, we cannot but conclude that these alone are the sure and direct means of attaining our only good. Let us then cheerfully cast ourselves at His sacred feet and earnestly entreat Him to excite our hearts to seek the highest perfection,

[1] "Take up My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart; and you shall find rest to your souls." (St. Matt. xi. 29.)

[2] St. John viii. 12. [3] 1 Timothy ii. 4. [4] St. John i. 9.

suitable to our vocation, entire detachment from all earthly things, and a more ardent desire of contempt and humiliations.

Let us offer up a colloquy with our Lady, beseeching her to help us to fight with constancy under the standard of her Son, and recite the "Hail Mary." Let us then turn to our Blessed Lord, offering to Him our resolutions and begging strength from Him to put them into execution, repeating the *Anima Christi*. Thirdly, let us address the Eternal Father, imploring Him to grant us grace to know and to imitate His well-beloved Son in the highest perfection of our state. End with the "Our Father."

1. The contemplation here presented is, as we have said, addressed to people in the world, especially to such as are desirous to choose a state of life, in order that, learning, on the one hand, the spirit and principle which animate Jesus Christ, and detecting, on the other, the crooked policy and evil maxims of Lucifer, they may be the more safely directed in their election. It is, however, of equal importance that all, even those whose state of life is already fixed, whether they be in Religion or in the world, should be stimulated to acquire greater perfection in their state by determining what fault in them stands most in need of correction, or what virtue calls for greater care in its practice. This contemplation also serves to confirm us in the state of life which we have chosen, and makes us resolve to fulfil its duties with more care, zeal, and exactness.

2. If we would compare this contemplation with that of the "Kingdom of Christ," we see how in the latter we offer ourselves to God to *bear* poverty and humiliation if it be His holy will, whereas in the "Two Standards" we beg to be received under the standard of Christ our King and Captain, in the practice of spiritual poverty, and even in the experience of actual poverty, provided we can endure the sufferings and humiliations of it without any sin or offence to God; and this marks great progress

in our attachment to the cause of our Lord and a higher degree of perfection.

3. Again, we remark the contrast of the *titles* which St. Ignatius gives to our Blessed Lord and the *epithets* by which he stigmatizes Lucifer. Our Lord is the General-in-chief and true Leader, our God, beautiful, amiable, and lowly, the true Life; He chooses His friends, and sends them forth, commending His mission to them, and the like. Whereas Lucifer is the captain of our enemies, the impious head, horrible of aspect, who rebukes his followers, treats them as slaves, and tyrannizes over them. Our King and Lord, on the contrary, chooses us and by His holy grace enables us to make right use of *our free-will*, to respond to His merciful design in combating the devil, in frustrating his impious efforts to ruin us and the rest of mankind, and thereby in promoting the cause of Jesus Christ. "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain."[1] The devil is the enemy of all who possess human nature; first and chiefly of our head, Jesus, and secondly, of all our race, whom he wishes to involve with himself in eternal misery: to this he is induced by his hatred of our King, and by his envy and jealousy at our being destined to inherit the heavenly glory which through his impious revolt he has forfeited.

4. The Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the second part of the Exercises are founded upon this exercise, and help to the better understanding of it. St. Ignatius pictures Lucifer as lifted up on an elevated seat figurative of his indomitable pride, amid fire and smoke, symbolical of instability, agitation, and dark design, situated near Babylon, which is the type of disorder and confusion. In this description he represents the devil in his true colours, as we see by the marvellous manner in which Satan produces confusion of mind and agitation of heart not only in those who are the victims of his crafty wiles, but also in the loyal followers of Jesus

[1] St. John xv. 16.

Christ, during their hours of desolation.[1] Were he to show himself as he really is, in the horror and terribleness of his appearance, none would enlist in his service; he is therefore compelled to act out a perpetual lie, transforming himself often into an angel of light, although a liar from the beginning, and "the father of lies."[2]

5. We remark in this contemplation, that St. Ignatius in the first part represents the devil as calling together countless devils under his standard, and makes no mention of men, who nevertheless are often his most active and efficient abettors, whereas in the second part he tells us "to contemplate how the Lord of the universe chooses such a variety of persons, apostles, disciples, &c., and sends them into the whole world to spread His holy doctrine amongst mankind of every class and condition," yet says nothing of the angels. Different reasons may be assigned for this. First, our Lord is not spoken of here as God, but as He is our King and Captain, "the Leader of the elect, the Eldest of many brethren." As *Man* He conducts His followers, who are poor, weak, humble men, and despised by the world, against the combined powers of Hell: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places,"[3] who, encouraged by His example and supported by His help, are capable not only of resisting but of putting to flight the whole of the infernal powers and unmasking their deceits. This is as true as it is a sublime and glorious picture, and calculated to animate with great zeal and courage, those whom He may be pleased to call to a higher state of life, or to a greater perfection in the state of life in which they are actually placed.

6. Jesus Christ is appropriately called "the *true* and *supreme Leader;*" for He is God our Lord, constituted King by His Eternal Father, our Saviour and Shepherd, who came into this world that He might give us life, and

[1] Rule 4, Discernment of Spirits. [2] St. John viii. 44.
[3] Ephes. vi. 12.

that very abundantly. He is represented as seated near Jerusalem, the city of peace, for He is the Prince of Peace, nay, He is our very peace, giving to us that "peace which surpasseth all understanding."[1] He occupies a lowly place, by which is expressed His profound humility: for though He is God, yet He humbled Himself, "emptied Himself," and bids us learn of Him because He is humble of Heart. He is beautiful beyond the children of men; "beauty is poured abroad in His lips;" gentle, lovely, and amiable; ingenuous and "full of sincerity and truth." He is disinterested and loving and devoted, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, and made Man."

7. If we compare the orders given by Lucifer with the instructions of our Lord, we observe how the former are stamped with arrogance, frenzy, hatred, and falsehood, the latter with humility, tenderness, love, and truthfulness; the former have for their object to lure souls to perdition, the latter to attract to eternal life, by the way of holy poverty, at least in spirit and if possible, and for God's glory, in effect. This voluntary poverty for Christ's sake will produce patience under humiliations and at length an ardent love of them. Of course to acquire an esteem for poverty is difficult, and it is harder still to attain a love of contempt and humiliation, but when acquired, the humility in which this practises us secures happiness and peace, for with humility come meekness, charity, modesty, obedience, and love of Jesus Christ.

8. It is by no means to be supposed that we are intended in this exercise to make our choice between the standard of Christ and that of Lucifer. There can be no question of this, for in the very beginning of the Exercises, whilst considering the "Principle or Foundation," we have formed our resolution to break entirely with the devil, and to fly from sin and from every occasion which might lead us into sin.

[1] Philipp. iv. 7.

REPETITION OF THE TWO STANDARDS.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Retain the three preludes of the last exercise, if possible, but make them with still greater study and detail.

The points in the two parts will also be the same: considering the persons, the object of each one, the means employed in its attainment, together with the words and instructions addressed to the followers of each. Let us note with dismay the energy of the spirit of evil and of the men and women whom he has seduced, and at the same time their success in dragging men to destruction. We must also apply this exercise to our own special state, for, if by God's grace and His loving mercy we habitually avoid mortal sin, and strive also to avoid venial sin, our enemy will not try to ensnare us in his nets or bind us with his chains; but if he can manage to cast any of his meshes round us, he may succeed in dragging us along a considerable distance and weakening our ardour in the cause of Christ.

1. He will not perhaps set plainly before us the allurements of riches, but he will suggest to us a love of ease, convenience, and comfort, in the manner of our food, apparel, furniture, and accommodation. With respect to this point especially, all good and pious persons should be on their guard, for we live in an age of great material civilization, when the zeal for comfort is carried to such length that, as the Sacred Text warns us, it is more difficult to live abstemiously in abundance than in straitened circumstances.

2. Again, he will not tempt such persons with vile and carnal pleasures, but he will try and persuade them to be chaste by halves, and to allow more freedom to their senses—especially to their eyes and tongue. He will urge the necessity of giving some scope to curiosity in what it naturally wants to see and read. Alas! how

many have abandoned the practice of their religion, and even the faith itself, through imprudent and promiscuous reading! He will encourage affections which, beginning virtuously, will by degrees end in impure desires, or some particular friendship; or else will inspire vain thoughts in regard of dress or of personal adornment.

3. He may even instil into us a craving for independence and greater liberty, as it is called,—a danger which is all the more serious since in our days this thirst is felt even by the very young. Nay, how often is it not declared that Jesus Christ Himself was an eloquent defender of independence and of democratic principles. He preached and promoted liberty it is true, but it was the true liberty of the children of God, which is quite consistent with a state of dependence.

4. Lastly, the devil will not urge such persons to ignore in theory or altogether in practice self-denial and mortification, but will, all the same, lead them on trivial grounds and for slight reasons gradually to neglect their exercises of mortification, and to seek their ease, and indulge their desires of relaxation and amusements, and, in fact, from self-love to make their lives as pleasant and agreeable as possible, and to shirk any trial or any labour which may call for sacrifice and involve unpleasantness or pain.

Let us in this repetition examine ourselves on such points, and see how far he has succeeded in alluring us along some of these paths, and let us resolve to break loose from his toils once for all. Again conclude with the colloquy of the preceding exercise.

We may measure the importance which St. Ignatius attaches to this meditation by the fact that he prescribes we should, if time allows, make a three-fold repetition of it, and that we should revert to it in our minds frequently during the course of the day.

ON THE THREE CLASSES.

1. The object of this exercise is to put the state of our will distinctly and definitely to the proof, in order to discover whether we are really determined to carry out in practice the means that must be employed if we are to follow Jesus Christ in earnest and to shut out all illusions from our minds.[1] The action of our will in the matter of election and of the means necessary for attaining perfection in one's state of life, may be vitiated in *three* ways: namely, by sluggishness and inefficiency; by reluctance to embrace all the means requisite for attaining our end; and by weakness, causing us to give way easily in the face of difficulties.

2. St. Ignatius illustrates the three classes by marking the action of each in the practice of poverty. In further illustration we might substitute the virtue of chastity or charity for that of poverty.

3. Our holy Founder leaves no doubt as to the essentially practical end to be aimed at in this exercise, when he uses the words "that we may *in fact* embrace," and not merely that we may *wish* to embrace, "that which is best."

4. With a view to making an election, for which also this exercise is intended as an immediate preparation, it will reveal to us the inclinations or affections we have towards earthly things, and will cause us to detach ourselves from them, whatever they may be, and so bring our hearts to that state of perfect indifference which is necessary for making a good election, either of a state of life, if that is our object, or of greater perfection in living according to the state of life which we have already embraced.[2]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us, as introduction, suppose three classes of men, each of which has acquired, and that not

[1] Conf. Roothaan, nn. 64—67. [2] *Direct.* xxiii. § 3; xxix. § 3.

purely or solely for love of God, one thousand ducats. Those under each class wish to save their souls and to be in peace with God our Lord by shaking off the weight and impediment which they experience from their affection to the money they possess.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we stand in the presence of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, having a sincere desire to know in what we can best please Him, and in what way He wishes us to serve Him.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that He will give us grace to choose effectually that which will prove most agreeable to God and most profitable to our souls; and for this purpose we may recite the *Veni Creator*.

First Point.—The first class would like to get rid of undue affection for the money, thereby to find peace in God our Lord and to save their souls, but they do not entertain the thought of giving up the money itself. It was honestly gained, with much labour and persevering industry: moreover, money is not a bad thing, it is a gift of God, and furnishes the means of doing good. Prudence, too, requires that we should provide against hard times; then, what would people say? This class resembles a sick man who would like to throw off his illness and regain his health, but applies no remedies. Such a disposition as this is most imperfect, a mere pretence deserving only our pity.

To this class belong those who have embraced a regular exterior course of life through a general wish to serve God and avoid the dangers and troubles to be met in the world, with a vague idea of imitating Jesus Christ. But they never put their hand to the work, they decline all real exertion, and take everything easily and quietly, shirking all difficulties and any duties against which they feel repugnance. They say prayers only when it suits them, and as it suits them, and employ their time according to the same principle. The author of Proverbs[1] well describes them: "Desires," he says, "kill the slothful, for his hands have refused to work

[1] Prov. xxi. 25.

at all," and again,[1] "The sluggard willeth and willeth not."

Let us take ourselves seriously to task, and ascertain whether we are attached to any particular person or earthly object, to any habit of self-esteem, self-will, worldly ambition or opinionativeness which may be the cause why after so many impulses from God, and stings of our own conscience, we are still so little in earnest, so inactive and irresolute, refusing to adopt any decided measures for correcting ourselves. If it be thus with us, let us blush for shame at our cowardice and insincerity, and resolve at once upon an energetic and radical change.

Second Point.—The second class have a decided desire to shake off all undue attachment to the money, but would fain still retain possession of it. Although they feel that the best course would be to abandon the treasure, which keeps them apart from God, they cannot bring themselves to do this, but try by a sort of compromise to bend God's will to theirs. They will practise poverty of *spirit*, but cannot bring themselves to resign all possession of the money. They will go half way with God, will give a certain amount in alms, will contribute to works of religion or of charity, but they cannot simply give up their treasure. Yet perhaps God wants it as in the case of the young man in the Gospel.[2] Like him they go away sorrowful and disappointed, because Jesus asks too much. So may a patient really wish to be cured, yet cannot be induced to take this or that nauseous medicine, or submit to the painful operation which is necessary. He will submit to many disagreeable remedies, but not to the particular one requisite for a cure. To say the least, the recovery of such a man would be very doubtful, for his line of conduct is calculated only to aggravate his disease. It is too often the same with those who have a strong wish to lead lives of virtue, and to serve God by imitating our Blessed Lord. With this object they will employ such means as suit their fancy, but not any which they dislike. They try to reconcile

[1] Prov. xiii. 4. [2] St. Matt. xix. 20.

the will and pleasure of God with their own, but cannot give themselves entirely up to Him. They will labour as much as you please, but in such things only as they like; they will obey others, in such matters as are conformable to their individual tastes and their own judgment; they will practise humility in a certain way and to a certain extent, but they draw the line at certain humiliations and certain modes. They persuade themselves to do some things, but as they will not undertake to do *all* that God requires of them, they live a life of wretched mediocrity and fail miserably in the end. They do what is most, but neglect the less, and thus fail in perfection and in gaining merit. And for want of taking a little more pains and making a little more sacrifice, they render vain and useless the efforts which they make, they resign the fruits of the victories already gained over themselves and the devil, and expose themselves to grievous temptations. Let us ask ourselves whether we are not of this class, and reflecting on the insult we thus offer to God by endeavouring to draw His will to ours rather than submit our will to His, besides the unhappiness and reproach of conscience which we bring upon ourselves, let us pray earnestly for grace to atone for our want of sincerity, thoroughness, and common sense.

Third Point.—The third class desire to root out once for all any attachments to this money, so as to have no preference either for its possession or the reverse, retaining it or not according as God our Lord shall manifest to be most conducive to the service and praise of His Divine Majesty. Of this class is the patient who wishes to get well at any cost, is ready to accept any medicine, however noisome, or undergo the most painful operation; and whose recovery is assured in consequence. So, too, those who have given themselves thoroughly to the service of God, seek only to know His holy will, and at once proceed to carry this into execution. They do not consider what will gratify their inclinations, what self-love, or self-ease, or the world would dictate; nor

do they allow their natural repugnance or natural feelings to influence them, but simply what God desires, and, cost them what it will, they will at once proceed to do it. This disposition enables them cheerfully to undertake any work which God may ask of them. It draws down upon the soul abundance of graces, fills it with force and energy, and inspires it with solid and sometimes with sensible consolation.

Pray earnestly that God would fill you with this spirit. The soul will then beyond doubt reach the perfection of its state, for it removes all obstacles from its path. God works for His glory in a soul which gives proof of its good-will, He will sustain it in its labours, and will enable it to do all things and to bear all things, not only easily, but even with joy.

Let us conclude with the same triple colloquy as in the preceding meditation.

NOTE 1.—St. Ignatius here calls our attention to the following point: that when we feel a strong aversion or repugnance to actual poverty, and are not indifferent in our esteem of poverty or riches, it will help much to the uprooting of such an inordinate affection if we beg in our colloquies, even though it goes against the grain, that God would vouchsafe to choose us for that state of actual poverty, and if we protest that we do really desire, petition and beg for it, provided it be to the service and praise of His Divine goodness.

This frame of mind is of great importance, as we see from the manner in which the Saint frequently refers to it. And what he says with regard to riches and poverty we must also apply to any other inordinate affection. It is in this manner that we are to overcome the repugnance we may experience in adopting what we are convinced is best for the soul's spiritual good, even though we interiorly feel afraid lest God should hear and grant our prayer.

Such prayer as this is well pleasing to Him, and is both highly meritorious and exceedingly efficacious,

as when our Lord Himself prayed: "Not what I wish, but what Thou wishest." [1]

What makes it so important is that ordinarily we feel especial repugnance against the very thing that God seeks from us. We must never forget that we make the Exercises for the purpose of overcoming ourselves and of destroying our inordinate affections, and to secure this result it is of great service that we should strive with all our strength to bend the soul to the contrary of that to which it is perversely inclined.[2]

Let us also remember that Jesus Christ sums up all His moral teaching in these words: "Whosoever will follow Me, let him take up his cross and deny himself, and so let him follow Me," [3] a lesson confirmed by the saying of à Kempis, "By how much thou dost violence to thyself, by so much shalt thou advance in virtue." [4]

Such are the maxims which we should have before our minds during the consideration of the "Three Classes."

2. In the "Foundation," St. Ignatius urges indifference of mind upon us, as a necessary condition for meditating upon the right use of creatures, and here he insists upon this indifference as absolutely requisite for making a true act of election. For want of this essential quality we see how the first and second class entirely neglect the principle of seeking in all things the praise, reverence, and service of God, and of desiring and choosing that simply which is most conducive to the end for which they are created.

3. In the contemplation of the "Two Standards" we detect the wiles of Lucifer, how he lures his victims on to their destruction by inspiring a strong attachment to things in themselves good, or at least indifferent; whereas Jesus Christ, who is the truth itself, would lead us to eternal life through the rooting out of all such inordinate attachments, even though it may involve war against all our natural inclinations. So pious an action

[1] St. Mark xiv. 36.

[2] Annot. xvi. [3] St. Luke ix. 23. [4] *Imitation*, bk. i. c. xxv.

as this in the right direction is what St. Ignatius terms *agendo contra;* and it is this particular grace for which we are to beg with great earnestness in our colloquy, notwithstanding the repugnance which we may feel in doing so.

4. After the two preceding contemplations, the exercitant may now proceed to the important work of Election, in respect either of his state of life, or of the means by which he is to make himself more perfect in that state which he has already embraced. If he is under the guidance of a director, St. Ignatius, according to the 14th, 15th, and 16th Annotations, warns the latter against interfering with or perhaps destroying the action of God in the soul of him who is making the Exercises. If the director be asked any questions on the matter, he is prudently to answer them: but his chief duty is to pray for the exercitant, to dispose him for the reception of God's grace, to explain to him clearly the rules and methods of election, to guard him against any errors or illusions, and keep before his mind Jesus Christ, his King and Lord. For the rest, let him leave the exercitant as far as possible to the guidance of our good God.

5. Even when he who makes the Exercises is engaged in the matter of election, the regular meditations and contemplations are not to be interrupted, but during them, as well as at other times, he will revolve that point in his mind whilst his thoughts rest upon our Lord as his model and guide.

THE THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY.

1. St. Ignatius here treats of three degrees of humility, a subject to be well weighed and reflected upon as disposing the mind for a ready and generous fulfilment of whatever it may please God to demand from us.[1] The need and extent of this generosity of the will

[1] Cf. Roothaan, n. 73.

must bear some proportion to the pain which compliance with the will of God costs us. It is the impress on our souls of that true humility, which acknowledges our dependence upon and submission to God's will in all things, out of consideration of His greatness and of our littleness, and which shows its readiness to subject itself to others for the sake of God.[1] The Angelic Doctor adds, in the same place, that humility may be described as the reverence for God which impels us to a contempt of self.

2. St. Ignatius lays down three degrees of this virtue, whereas St. Benedict[2] enumerates twelve, and St. Gregory[3] seven. But our Saint treats of humility only as it is an interior disposition of the soul, while the others regard it as affecting us in relation to external objects, circumstances, and persons.

3. The great use of this consideration is that it helps us to probe ourselves, and discover how we stand in regard of generosity. In this respect it harmonizes with the last two meditations, which contain all that is necessary to prepare us for making a good election, whether it be of a state of life, or of the subject of our Particular Examination, or of the definite resolution which God may be demanding from us in our present circumstances.

4. Now the *first* degree of humility does not consist in a man's never committing a mortal sin, but in an habitual disposition of mind never to commit it, and never to entertain a deliberate thought of doing so, were he even to gain the whole world or to avoid the greatest of all evils by it. Such a disposition is necessary for salvation. As St. Ignatius expresses it: "For this degree, it is requisite I so submit myself, that in every thing I obey the law of God our Lord, in such wise that even though men were to make me lord of all created things in this world, I would not for the sake of saving

[1] "Humilitas autem secundum quod est specialis virtus, præcipue respicit subjectionem hominis ad Deum, propter quem etiam aliis humiliando se subjicit." (St. Thomas, 2a. 2æ. q. 161. a. i. ad. 5.)

[2] *Reg.* c. 7. [3] 23 *Moral.* c. 4.

my own temporal life enter into deliberation about breaking any commandment, whether Divine or human, which bound me under pain of mortal sin."

The two points on which we might be most liable to fail are, as Father Acquaviva[1] observes, chastity and charity.

May God confirm us in this degree. Without His grace we should, like St. Peter, fall; but this grace we shall secure if we studiously avoid the occasions which expose us to danger, and are faithful in the duty of prayer. Let us often say to Him, *Dignare Domine die isto sine peccato nos custodire*—"Vouchsafe, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin."

5. The *second* degree of humility answers, in the words of St. Ignatius, to the state wherein "I neither desire nor am more inclined for riches rather than poverty, for honour rather than dishonour, a long life rather than a short life, provided only equal service be rendered to God our Lord, and to the salvation of my own soul; and in which, further, I would never enter into serious deliberation to commit a venial sin, were I by that to obtain all things created, or even to save my own life."

Though this state is more perfect it does not rise higher than simple justice, while faith and right reason inculcate its necessity. It is, moreover, a state without which we can never be truly happy, at the same time it secures an ever-increasing purity in the world, and draws down fresh graces upon us.

6. The *third* degree of humility is the most perfect, and includes the first and second degrees. It indicates an habitual disposition of the soul in which, supposing equal praise and glory to redound to the Divine Majesty, I desire and choose rather poverty with Christ's poor, than riches; contempt with Christ contemned, than honours; ignominies along with Christ filled with reproaches; and to be looked upon as a fool and nothing worth for Christ's sake, who was so accounted,

[1] *Industriæ*, c. i.

rather than to possess riches, honours, or the world's esteem.[1]

This degree comprises perfect love of Christ our King, upon which it is founded, and is an outcome of the contemplations on the "Kingdom of Christ" and on the "Two Standards." Its spirit is shared in by all those who ambition to distinguish themselves in the service of our Blessed Lord.

He who has attained thus far has reached a degree of exalted sanctity more sublime than that of ecstasies or revelations. He already bears the cross in his heart, and embraces with love everything that is a cross. He rejoices in sufferings which he accepts as sent from the hands of God. If he has to use creatures which are agreeable to nature, he uses them only because God so ordains it, not in order to satisfy his natural inclinations.

It is a great grace to comprehend the value of this degree of humility, but it is the greatest of all to attain to it. If as yet we cannot reach it, we should at all events be ever striving towards it, and thus we shall preserve ourselves in the second degree. It is this which St. Ignatius lays down in the eleventh and twelfth Rules of the Summary of his Constitutions, as the perfection which each of his subjects is to be ever striving to possess.

7. When once this degree is attained, we have reached the summit of the Exercises: all the rest serves but to confirm and strengthen us in it. It is pre-eminently the folly of the Cross, comprising the true service of God, our own salvation, the right use of creatures, the sure way to avoid sin and to secure victory

[1] "Dicendum illud genus humilitatis est valde conforme modo loquendi et exemplis Sanctorum, nam conformitatem ad Christum putant esse sufficientem rationem amandi omnem abjectionem et humilitatis modum." (1 St. Peter ii. 21.) "Fateor tamen ab hoc motivo nunquam esse separabilem majorem Dei gloriam et majorem fructum gratiæ ac perfectionis spiritualis, cæteris paribus; et ratio est quia in eo motivo includitur major amor et major reverentia ad Christum Dominum." (Suarez, ix. c. v. n. 26.)

over our passions. We may say it is the highest wisdom, and that along with this all good things come to us.[1]

It is well to revert to these degrees of humility frequently in this part of the Exercises.

8. St. Ignatius observes that for those who wish to extend the time given to the second part of the Exercises, other meditations on the Mysteries of the Life of our Lord up to His Passion may be added. Amongst these he enumerates the Visitation of our Lady, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Circumcision, and the like.

9. But yet the matter of the Election is to be entered upon when we contemplate Jesus quitting His Mother at Nazareth and going up to the Jordan.

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD.[2]

NOTE.—After Jesus had spent thirty years in obscurity under obedience to His Mother, the time came for Him to commence His public work, the promotion of His

[1] "Now all good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands." (Wisdom vii. 11.)

The first and second degrees are clearly the fruit of the First Week of the Exercises. For whatever proves an obstacle to my last end must be avoided at all cost; nor is there anything in creatures to which I must not be at least so far indifferent. The third absorbs all, and is the fruit of the "Kingdom of Christ" and of the "Two Standards." It supposes that we strive to be through love like Jesus Christ, who through love would make Himself like us. St. Ignatius here teaches nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, in whom are all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Those who are in this state—*Stulti sunt hominibus et non sapientes secundum carnem, hos elegit Deus ut confundat fortes*, &c.—they have found the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price.

[2] "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized by him. But John stayed Him, saying, I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said to him, Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus being baptized forthwith came out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (St. Matt. iii. 13—17.)

Father's glory and the sanctification and salvation of mankind. In this undertaking His very first act contained wonderful lessons for us.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—We have to consider how our Lord left His Blessed Mother and His home, how He repaired to the Jordan and was pleased to be baptized by St. John. How the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven proclaimed Him to be the beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased.

Prelude 2.—We may in imagination take our place amongst the crowd on the banks of the Jordan.

Prelude 3.—We should beg earnestly of the Holy Spirit that we may know more clearly our Blessed Lord as revealed to us in this mystery, that we may love Him more tenderly, and may imitate Him more perfectly, especially in His detachment, humility, and courage.

First Point.—Let us try to fathom the depth of those painful and conflicting thoughts which filled the hearts of Jesus and Mary when their time for parting had come. He had lived so long and so happily, although in poverty and labour, with His beloved Mother, and now He must leave her a widow and alone, in order to do His Father's will. He is about to go forth from the sheltered haven of Nazareth and launch out upon the open and troubled sea of life, alone among strangers, and no man to sympathize with Him. His Mother also must give full consent to His leaving. The light of her eyes, the breath of her mouth departs: and on so perilous an enterprise; and she cannot go with Him to help and comfort Him. Surely the prophecy of Holy Simeon is beginning its fulfilment. They are acceptable to God and therefore they must suffer, and bravely, generously, and cheerfully they welcome the sacrifice. Let us learn once for all that to fit ourselves to do God's will and advance His glory we must be ready to quit everything, and do violence even to those natural affections which may be good and holy, and which the Author of our nature has

implanted within us. Further, to carry out God's will and to merit the grace necessary for enabling us to do this, we must make a complete sacrifice of our own inclinations, of our likes and dislikes, with the utmost generosity and courage. Let us learn also another lesson from our Blessed Lord, namely, to be content that we should be ignored, should become as a solitary in the midst of a community, and should see others receive sympathy and consideration while we are left friendless and alone. Life in the service of God is not a time for play; it is indeed a time of real and solid happiness, but it is full of seriousness, of suffering, and of sacrifice; and amongst its greatest trials is that of feeling oneself left alone and unheeded by others.

Second Point.—Let us contemplate our Lord in the midst of the crowd of publicans, soldiers, and sinners of every kind. "The Lord comes to be baptized along with servants, the universal Judge with criminals."[1] He comes to be baptized, thereby leading men to suppose Him guilty of actual and personal sins, and so He submits to a ceremony which implied a protestation of sorrow and repentance. But why this? It is to set us an example of heroic humility,[2] for as He began His mortal life, so will He begin His Public Ministry with an astounding act of humility, not only by hiding the perfections which were in Him, but by assuming the semblance of faults that could not be in Him. Oh! let us look into ourselves and see with sorrow how marked a contrast we present. We not only hide and conceal the defects which are in us, but we wear the appearance of virtues and of qualities which we do not really possess. We are disappointed if we find that men do not appreciate us, and are miserable if they seem to blame or disregard us. And all this though we have professed to follow our Lord and have offered ourselves for suffering and humiliation.

Let us see how St. John, because of his cleanness of

[1] Chrysostom, Hom. 12.

[2] Augustine, l. v. *De Bapt.* c. ix; Toletus, § 45.

heart, is blessed with a clear recognition of our Lord and demurs to baptize Him until He orders it, that He might "fulfil all justice." And yet, what law of justice obliges Jesus to it? He is innocence itself, He is the Immaculate Lamb who is to take away the sins of the whole world. The law that does this is the will of His Father, who would have Him first appear as a sinner, as the refuse of men, and who would then in the very act of its fulfilment declare Him to be the Redeemer of the world and the Son of God.

"Sine modo." Now we must begin with humiliations; exaltation and glory will come later. Let us at last be convinced that the exaltation of the Majesty of God through our means must begin from our self-abasement. We profess our desire to give glory to God and to sanctify our own souls, let us begin by washing away the stains of pride, ambition, and desire of worldly esteem. When we have done this, we may hope that we are with real earnestness following in the footsteps of Christ. Let us also say to our Lord, we have a baptism wherewith to be baptized, a baptism of humiliations and self-conquest, and we are in sore straits until it be accomplished, for corrupt nature rebels against it, fear and repugnance will try to make us fly from it; but do Thou, O Lord, strengthen us and give us courage by granting us true humility, by weaning our hearts from honour and esteem, that so we may be Thy true followers.

Third Point.—When our Lord was baptized and engaged in prayer, offering Himself up to His Eternal Father, behold how in the presence of all the people, the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost in the visible form of a dove alighted upon Him, and a loud voice from above was heard to say: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Jesus is in truth Infinite Wisdom, given to the world as our Master, to teach us a new and heavenly doctrine. He is the Son of the Eternal God, the dearly Beloved, through whom alone all others are to be loved, by whom and through whom alone all men can hope to please God, by imitating His

virtues and conforming themselves to His likeness. Let us then, from henceforth, place Jesus before our minds as our Master, our Teacher, and our Model, and let us resolve to lead a life in true conformity to His, and to regulate and order our conduct in obedience to His maxims. It is the only, and it is the sure way to please God, to promote His glory and sanctify our own souls.

Let us enkindle these desires in our breasts, and repeat with fervour the three colloquies of the foregoing meditation.

St. Ignatius bids us, if time allows, to make three repetitions of this meditation, and to end in addition with an application of the senses.

ON ELECTION.[1]

NOTE.—This part of the Exercises recommends itself not only because it has been approved by the Holy See, but because the rules here laid down are replete with sound sense, are full of the highest heavenly wisdom, and of irresistible logic; they are short, simple, clear, and, at the same time, so wide in the reach of their application as to embrace every state of life. In fact

[1] If we have seriously meditated on the "Two Standards" and "Three Classes," and have pondered over the "Three Degrees of Humility," we cannot fail to have come to this one conclusion, that we must all turn our election to the matter of poverty and humiliations, whether we be already in Religion or in the world. For these are the characteristics of the spirit of Christ, which all men are called upon to copy, though of course not al in the same way, nor all to the same degree of perfection. If the matter of election, as will generally happen, is not the determinating of a state of life, but the correction of some fault, such as moroseness, self-will, self-conceit, uncharitableness, &c., or the acquisition of some virtue, as charity, self-denial, humility, &c., our end will and must be attained in this spirit of the third degree of humility, out of respect and love for Jesus Christ and an ardent desire to be more and more like Him, independent of all other considerations.

there is no state of life, nor condition in any state, to which the principles which they involve cannot be applied, and in which they do not suffice.

Prelude to the making of Election.—The principle by which we must be guided in any election which we may be called upon to make, is that on our part we have the simple intention of fulfilling the end of our creation, namely, the service and praise of God and the salvation of our soul. This, and this alone, is the end to be kept in view. Consequently my choice must be so directed as to help me to attain that end: I may never subordinate the end to my choice, but always my choice to the end: nor may I imitate those who enter first upon a state of life, and then consider how in that state they can manage to secure God's glory and save their souls; besides which nothing should sway me in adopting or rejecting any means except the question how it affects the service and praise of God our Lord and my eternal salvation. Three impediments stand in the way of carrying out this resolution.

Of these one assails us from without, and is the suggestion of the devil, though not unfrequently it is attributed to our Lord. In order to prevent our being misled on this point, St. Ignatius places before us, in the "Two Standards," the character, designs, and principles of Jesus Christ as contrasted with those of the evil spirit.

Another impediment to our making a good election arises from within, and consists in the repugnance, delusion, and irresoluteness of our own will, to overcome which and strengthen our wavering resolution, the consideration of the "Three Classes" is here proposed.

The third impediment is connected with the object itself about which our election has to be made, when, for instance, we think it is in conformity with the teaching of our Lord, and in reality it is not. This mistake may come either from our passions being interested, or from a hastily formed misapprehension, or from fancying that

to be an effect of grace which is in truth an impulse of nature. To counteract this impression we should meditate on the "Three Degrees of Humility."

As to the matter in regard of which an election can be made: (*a*) In the first place it must be either good, or at all events indifferent, in itself, and it must be conformable to the spirit of the Catholic Church. If opposed to that spirit or in any respect injurious, it cannot be open to our choice. (*β*) Of the things properly subject to election some are mutable, such as benefices; others are immutable, as is marriage or the priesthood. (*γ*) If an immutable state has been entered into under the influence of any improper motive or inordinate affection, there must be now sincere repentance and every effort made to lead a good life in that state which has been adopted not in answer to a Divine vocation, but by an erroneous election. In such a case let the counsels of the Apostle be followed.[1] (*δ*) If one has made a right election, and has not allowed himself to be swayed by carnal and worldly considerations, there is no occasion why he should proceed to another election of a state of life, unless it be by way of confirming himself in his present state; but let him make an election how he may render himself more perfect in that in which he is placed.

Observe, however, that if there was any fault in such election, he should remedy the fault or defect, whereby he will please God our Lord and will draw down great graces.

There are different seasons and methods by which God makes known His will to us, and of which we are to avail ourselves when we seek to learn what that will is.

The *first* of these is of very rare occurrence. In it God so moves and draws the will that the person neither doubts nor can doubt his duty to execute exactly what is pointed out to him.

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 13; xiv. 40.

The *second* way of seeing the indications of God's will is through the consolations and desolations which He sends. He who seeks to be guided in the choice which he is about to make, should not enter into too much reasoning or discourse within himself, but rather wait for the voice and inspiration of God, humbly begging for light with full resignation to the Divine will and an earnest desire to know it.[1] This done, let him take note of the periods when he is visited with spiritual comfort, combined with peace of mind, enlargement of heart and confidence in God, and also again those in which he experiences on the contrary marked desolation, aridity, and trouble. Let him examine to which side his election now draws under these different experiences, and judge accordingly; knowing that when God speaks to the soul He inspires spiritual delight and consolation, but that the devil perplexes and disturbs it.[2] This process should not be made once only, but repeated from time to time.[3]

In this *third* mode of trying to ascertain the will of God the understanding is primarily employed, and this mode is the surest and the most common one. In it we sift the matter well before God, striving to move and draw our will to choose what is most for His glory and our salvation.[4] When adopting this method we must hold our minds in a state of practical equilibrium, showing a time when our thoughts and aims are free from all disturbance and agitation.[5] Then placing ourselves in the presence of God, and keeping the end we have before us well in view, we begin our deliberation on the points we have to decide upon. We examine first the one side and then the other, consider in the light of faith the spiritual advantages and also disadvantages arising from each point under consideration,[6] and so choose the side that seems the most conducive to God's glory and our own good.

[1] *Direct.* xxx. §§ 5, 6. [2] *Ibid.* xxvii. §§ 2—6.
[3] *Ibid.* xxvii. §§ 6, 7. [4] *Ibid.* xxvi. § 3. [5] *Ibid.* xxviii. § 2.
[6] *Ibid.* xxxi. § 3.

This is certainly, as I have said, the surest and safest method, and may be used with advantage even after the first and second. For if the impulses and feelings we have observed ourselves really came from God, they will certainly stand the test and examination of the third method, and should this disclose anything wrong in principle, we may conclude that the impulses experienced were not from God, but from the spirit of darkness who hates the light.[1]

St. Ignatius furnishes two forms for the practical application of this third method. The first is by way of a meditation.

Prelude 1.—We must first fix our attention on the point of election, and view it surrounded with all its attendant circumstances and obligations.

Prelude 2.—We must place ourselves in the presence of God, preserving our mind in a state of calm and unfettered equilibrium, having the end and aim of our life well in view.

Prelude 3.—We should then beg of God to enlighten our mind and inflame our will that we may see and embrace that which is most for His glory and our salvation in this affair.

First Point.—Let us weigh on one hand the advantages, conveniences, and other points in favour of the choice to which we feel drawn; and, on the other hand, with equal care and sincerity the disadvantages, inconveniences, and other difficulties which make against it; in both cases writing them down on paper, over against each other, if need be.

Second Point.—We must, in the second place, ponder over the different arguments for and against, weighing them in the balances of reason and of holy faith; and, after compelling ourselves to acknowledge which of the two prevails, conclude accordingly.

Third Point.—This done, we will offer up our conclusion to God in earnest prayer, and if He pleases to

[1] *Direct.* xxviii. §§ 6—9.

grant us comfort, fervour, and peace of mind, or other signs of His approbation, we will decide the question, praying for the grace necessary to put our resolve into execution.[1]

This form we should employ on frequent occasions, in order to confirm and strengthen ourselves in our election.

The second of these two methods takes the form of four heads of serious self-examination.

1. Does the inclination or affection which draws me towards my choice proceed solely from the love of God and the desire of salvation? Am I at all moved by considerations of worldly distinction, or of human respect, or of desire for my own ease and comfort? Have I been simply influenced by my friends and companions or my relations? Again, suppose it be a question of entering into the ecclesiastical state, let me ask myself whether I have been moved to embrace it because I like preaching or teaching, or because it raises me to a better position, or that my parents wish it? Should it involve the question of our entering Religion, do I allow myself to reject it on account of natural repugnance to poverty and obedience, or some other of its duties, such as fasting, corporal austerities? &c.

2. Suppose I was being consulted on this point by a friend in whose eternal welfare I was most deeply interested, would not the advice I gave him reflect my own unbiassed and unimpeded conviction as to what his action should be under the circumstances? Let the same then be my answer to myself.

3. Again, were I now at the point of death, what is the choice I should then wish to have made, as affording to me the truest comfort and security? That clearly is the choice I should make now.

4. Once more, when I am summoned before the dread tribunal of God to be judged, what shall I then

[1] *Direct.* xxxii.

wish I had done, of what feel myself able to give the better account to my Judge?

By the light of these reflections I must here also choose, and recommending the matter to God, conclude as in the foregoing method.

If from time to time we were to apply one or other of these latter methods of election to subjects which require consideration, or in which our manner of treating with others is of consequence, we should be spared many real causes of regret, and should avoid the evils which arise from acting through impulse or from mere natural motives.

Again, we should then remove any causes of self-reproach for culpable imprudence, and of blame for having acted less well. Moreover, by acting thus supernaturally and to the best of our ability, whether our choice ended in success or failure, our merit in the sight of God would be equally great. How many imprudent speeches, unkind words and actions, and consequent heart-burnings and uncharitable and bitter resentments would by this simple means be prevented. It is from neglect of this practice that too often those in authority, instead of promoting the happiness and winning the confidence of their subjects, prove signal failures in government, alienate their dependents, and fail to win their respect, without which neither peace nor real happiness nor order can be expected to exist.

ON REFORMATION OF LIFE.

If one is already placed in a state of life which is fixed and unchangeable, or if he does not feel any special call to change his state of life, although it may by its nature be capable of this, it is very useful to consider whether any change is advisable by way of amendment or reformation as regards the use of creatures, or the

manner of exercising authority, or the example which he gives to others in his words and actions, or the extent to which he directs all things to the greater praise and glory of God our Lord. Let such a one remember that he will make progress in spiritual life just in proportion as he quits himself of self-love, of self-will, and of desire for his own comfort. On the strength of this observation of St. Ignatius, we may make the following meditation on reformation of life.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us with lively faith and great confidence place ourselves in the presence of Jesus Christ and His saints.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg what we desire, namely, to know and fulfil the will of God in regard to our whole life and conduct.

First Point.—We should recall the various lights which we have received during our retreat, and strengthen the good desires already conceived. Above all, let us devote ourselves to the acquisition of some particular virtue or the eradication of some particular vice or fault. Let us be persuaded that God asks nothing from us which is not for our own welfare, and which will not conduce even to our happiness. The more indeed our sacrifice may cost us, let us persist all the longer and more earnestly in prayer that He will grant us abundant grace to make it.

Second Point.—We should examine also what grace, either for the present or the future, we stand most in need of, selecting some grace that directly tends to our perfection and sanctification in our present state of life.

Third Point.—We must also weigh over in our minds what is likely to be an obstacle in the way of our giving to God that which He asks of us, or might prevent our receiving the grace which we desire, and having discovered this obstacle, we must generously make a renunciation of it before God.

In our oblation of ourselves to God for the accomplishment of His holy will we must be truly generous and

magnanimous, for then we shall most assuredly render greater glory to Him, advance our own sanctification here, and obtain eternal salvation hereafter.

NOTE.—It may be well to observe that in this part of the Exercises those who make a retreat annually should devote two days to going over this method of election for the reformation of their lives, directing their attention either to the correction of some fault, or the acquisition of some virtue, for in this way they will make a fresh step forward towards the general perfection of their state of life.

RULES FOR THE FURTHER DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS.

MORE ESPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN THE SECOND PART OF THE EXERCISES. THESE RULES ARE OF THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE FOR PERSONS AIMING AT PERFECTION IN THEIR PARTICULAR STATE, AS ENABLING THEM TO RECOGNIZE MORE EASILY THE WILES OF SATAN, AND THUS PROTECT THEMSELVES BETTER AGAINST THEM. THEY HELP US ALSO TO DISTINGUISH THE CALL OF GOD FROM THE INFLUENCE OF OUR OWN NATURAL INCLINATIONS, AND FURNISH US WITH SAFEGUARDS IN CONDUCTING THE IMPORTANT WORK OF OUR ELECTION.

THIS SHOWS HOW USEFUL THEY MUST BE TO US IN GUIDING AND DIRECTING OTHERS WHO ARE DESIROUS OF MAKING PROGRESS IN PERFECTION AND COME TO ASK OUR ADVICE IN MATTERS WHICH ARE "TOO SUBTLE AND TOO HIGH FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND."[1]

Rule 1.—"It is peculiar to God and His angels to impart true joy and spiritual gladness in their inward motions or inspirations, removing all sadness and disturbance of mind caused by the enemy of human nature, who aims at destroying such joy and spiritual consolation by

[1] Annotation ix.

means of specious reasonings, sophistries, and fallacies." These consolations are of three kinds: some affecting only the senses; others influencing the mind alone; whilst others again make themselves felt in both, when the affection of the mind extends its influence to the senses. Of these the one least liable to deception or perversion is internal consolation. The first, which affects the senses and is often granted to those who are only entering upon the service of God, is useful indeed to him who receives it, but of itself it neither is a sign of holiness nor does it promote it: nay, they who experience it must be on their guard lest the devil pervert it to their spiritual injury by luring them into extravagances. The surest sign of the Divine action in the souls of those who are earnestly prosecuting the service of God is peace, which our Lord brought into the world and which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit: consequently in such souls whatever destroys or disturbs that peace comes not from God, but from our enemy, "the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning."[1] To effect this he makes use of specious or *apparent reasons*, as with St. Ignatius, by proposing doubts regarding his confessions, with St. Alphonsus regarding God's goodness and the loss of souls, with St. Catharine about her temptations, &c.; of *sophistries*, as with those who are aiming at great purity of conscience, by inducing them to scrutinize every thought, word, or action, thereby to plunge them into an abyss of anxiety; of *perpetual fallacies*, by suggesting false sources of consolation, or filling the mind with illusions tending to draw his victims into extravagant and unusual ways, as we read in the case of St. Teresa, of St. Catharine, and others. Such illusions as ecstasies, apparitions, voices, and the like, not unfrequently are the production of a heated brain, of a weak mind, of an unhealthy imagination, of a strained nervous system, or finally, of the devil himself, who has the power of acting on the senses so as to affect the imagination and thereby entice the mind and will to evil.

[1] St John viii. 44.

Rule 2.—"It belongs to God our Lord alone to grant consolation to the soul without any preceding cause, to excite motions in it, attracting it entirely to the love of His Divine Majesty. I say without cause, that is, without previous perception or knowledge of any object from which such consolation might arise in the soul through the exercise of the understanding or will."

Rule 3.—"When some cause has preceded it is possible for the good or bad spirit to give consolation, but with opposite intentions: the good angel in order to induce the soul to make progress and advance from good to better; the bad angel, with the intention of bringing it henceforward to yield to his wicked and malicious designs."

It is certain that God has conferred on the angels power to move and influence mankind; but to none has He granted the faculty of entering freely the soul and illuminating or moving it directly and immediately; this He reserves to Himself. To them He only concedes the power of influencing the will by presenting an object to it, by stimulating the passions, or by external suggestion.[1]

Again, the good spirit prompts us to do those things which are contrary to our depraved nature, sweetly draws us from that which is less good or imperfect to that which is better, excites us to strive after our own sanctification before devoting ourselves to the sanctification of others, to practise the virtues of our state of life, to show ourselves obedient to those in authority. On the other hand, the enemy of our human nature would incite us to indulge in all that flatters our senses, self-love, vanity, and a thirst for notoriety; to attach undue importance to consolation, thereby causing us disappointment and dejection; to give ourselves up to external observances that attract the eyes of others, to the detriment of our own simplicity, sanctification, and progress in virtue; finally to make us discontented with our lot or office or even our state of life, and so encourage self-will or self-opiniativeness, &c.

[1] St. Augustine, Serm. xviii. on Psalm cxviii.

In a word, whilst the good spirit gently persuades us to carry out the Divine will in all things and to follow in the footsteps of the humble and patient Son of Mary, the devil strives to seduce us from the path of solid virtue, to call in question practically at least the doctrine and example of our Blessed Lord, and to substitute for simplicity and ingenuousness a self-seeking or hypocritical mode of action.

Rule 4.—"It is peculiar to the evil spirit to enter a devout soul in the guise of innocence, by assuming the form of an angel of light, and then to come out wearing his own colours. That is to say, he will begin by suggesting good thoughts in conformity with the disposition of the just soul, and afterwards gradually endeavour to involve it in his secret snares, and instil perverse intentions, seeking thereby to gain his own wicked ends."

Thus when one is taking special pains to acquire a particular virtue, or to root out a defect, the devil tries to seduce him into extreme measures, or by some other artifice to vex, harass, and ruin his soul, as for example, by exaggerating zeal into indiscretion, devotion into religious excitement, mortification into a proud fanaticism. In this way also he has succeeded in establishing many heresies, in producing insanity from scruples, in subverting many a vocation. The surest safeguard against all such attempts is to be found in humility and childlike obedience.

Rule 5.—"We ought to be very careful in watching the course of such thoughts. If we find their beginning, progress, and end are in every respect good, and leading only to what is good, we may conclude that they come from the good angel: but if the thoughts have a bad termination, if they tend to evil or to a lesser good, and if they weaken, disturb, or disquiet the soul, this is a clear sign that they proceed from the bad angel, the enemy of our eternal salvation."

Rule 6.—"When the enemy of our soul has been discovered, it is profitable for him who has been thus tempted, to examine the process of the good thoughts

originally suggested to him, and their beginning, and to observe how little by little the devil gradually contrived to rob him of his state of peace and spiritual delight, until he led him downward to his own depraved purpose; because such examination will place him on his guard against the like deception for the future."

Rule 7.—"In those who are making progress in virtue, the good spirit touches the soul gently and sweetly, like drops of water entering into a sponge; whereas the evil spirit strikes it rudely and sharply like water falling on a stone. But in the case of those who are going from good to bad, or from bad to worse, the very contrary happens," &c. The reason for this lies in the disposition of the soul, according as there is opposition or not between that and the spirit which seeks admission.

Rule 8.—"When there is consolation without preceding cause, inasmuch as it proceeds solely from God our Lord, the person to whom it is given ought nevertheless to examine carefully and to distinguish the exact period of the consolation from that which follows it, in which the soul continues in its fervour; for in this second period it often happens that the soul makes plans and resolutions which are not inspired by God our Lord; and hence they should be well examined before they are carried into effect.[1]

It is certain that some inspirations and inward motions are caused in the soul immediately by God, the Author and Master of His graces, without the help or ministry of any other cause.[2] Whereas any other spirit, whether good or bad, cannot by itself immediately move

[1] Comp. Gagliardi, *De Reg. Discret. Spirit.*

[2] S. Thomas docet (3. q. viii. ad. 1.): "Solum Deum posse influere interius rationali menti." (q. lxiv. a. 1.) "Solum Deum posse illabi animæ." Suarez (lib. ix. c. v. n. 31.): "Certum est dari in anima nostra internos quosdam motus tam intellectus quam voluntatis." (Conf. Trid. sess. vi.; Psalm cxviii.): "Item certum est has inspirationes vel illuminationes interdum fieri immediate ab ipso Deo . . . interdum vero et sæpe fiunt per bonos Angelos custodes. E contrario certum est dæmones conari ad imitandum hanc internam motionem convertendo illam in malum," &c.

our understanding or will; but only by means of images and sensible or imaginary objects.

St. Ignatius in his second Rule observes that it is God alone who is the Master of the human soul, who can produce consolation without any preceding cause, that is, without anything, calculated to cause them, having affected either the senses, or the understanding, or will.[1] Such kind of inspirations, which almost instantaneously inflame the will and illumine the understanding, though sometimes peculiar to persons advanced in virtue, are nevertheless extraordinary and very rare, and should not be looked for or easily supposed. For this reason, in the eighth Rule, the Saint with great prudence advises us that, although we think that the instinct or consolation which we feel proceeds immediately from God, we must premise a diligent examination before we give our approbation, because it is hard to discern whether it has come from God or from ourselves, and because, though the instinct or consolation from God preceded, yet there might immediately supervene something arising from our own will and judgment or from the instigation of the devil.[2] Hence we may infer that it is very dangerous for a soul to regulate herself in her deliberations only by these motions of the will and interior instincts without employing due examination and considerations based upon reason.[3]

As to the more common inspirations and feelings, which are preceded by some connatural and proportionate cause, they may arise from either the good or the bad spirit, as St. Ignatius says in the third Rule;[4] but we may form a prudent conjecture of their cause from three things:

(*a*) From the *matter*, as in Rule 4. For if the impulse is towards something sinful or conducive to sin, it must come from the evil spirit; but if it be towards something good we must consider it with caution; for the evil spirit

[1] Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. nn. 39, 40. [2] *Summa*, 2a. 2æ. q. 171. a. 5.
[3] *Direct.* xxviii. § 5. [4] Suarez, lib. ix. c. v. nn. 31, 37.

sometimes foments good desires thereby to ensnare us, and so to lead us to the less good or to sin. Therefore we must consider the matter with its circumstances, its consequences, &c., and if we find some evil in any of these, it is a sign that it is from the devil.

(β) From the *end*. Having examined the matter, we must inspect the end towards which the impulse or feeling tends.[1] For as the good spirit suggests feelings to excite in our will laudable and honest intentions, and also holy ends tending to perfect us in our state, so the devil, though he may at first dissemble, nevertheless by degrees insinuates secretly some end either sinful, which corrupts and spoils all the good which he represents to us, or which prevents a greater good and the perfection of our state.

(γ) From the *manner* of *moving*. This St. Ignatius lays down in Rules 1 and 7. It is the custom of God and the good spirit to inspire a certain joy and peace, and of the evil spirit melancholy, despondency, and turmoil, according to the disposition and state of the soul.

If it be well disposed and is striving to advance in virtue, the good spirit moves it gently and sweetly with increase of joy, elasticity, and peace, whilst, on the contrary, the malignant spirit depresses and perturbs it. But if the soul be in sin and swayed by its passions, the devil tries to lull it into false security, to distract and dissipate it, whereas the good spirit endeavours to draw it from its terrible state by stings of conscience, by fear of God's judgments, &c., as we see in the seventh Rule.

We note in these eight rules proofs of the wonderful experience of St. Ignatius, and his extraordinary prudence and discretion. This discretion is necessary for all of us, not only in regard to the action of the good and evil spirits upon our souls, whether by consolation or desolation, but also in all our undertakings; and, therefore, we ought always to study carefully the progress of our ideas and views, and to avoid rushing too precipitately or

[1] Rule 3.

acting incautiously. It is for want of this discretion that men are often drawn into indiscreet zeal, or to the practice of excess in corporal austerities, surpassing their physical or moral strength, until they give way under the burden, and either become useless and unfit for the duties of their state, or plunge into deplorable laxity. Let us imitate St. Ignatius, and propose to ourselves, in all we do, to act ever according to the measure of Divine grace, as far as it shall be for God's glory and for our soul's salvation; and above all things let us studiously avoid allowing ourselves to speak or act solely according to the promptings and dictates of our natural feelings.

ON DISTRIBUTION OF ALMS.

NOTE.—St. Ignatius gives us certain rules to be observed in our *ministry* of almsgiving; by this expression intimating to us that it is a duty imposed upon us in regard of all superfluities, and more especially if they are derived from ecclesiastical sources.

In general we may say that the Saint wishes us to apply in such cases the rules which he lays down in the second form of the third manner or time of election, as given above.

Rule 1.—If I distribute alms to persons to whom I am allied by ties of family or of close friendship, I ought to be careful that the feelings of attachment prompting me thereto arise from the love of God our Lord, and that my affection is really *for* and *in* Him.

Rule 2.—I should consider what advice I would proffer to another in whose spiritual interest I was much concerned were he to consult me under similar circumstances, having only God's glory, the cause of charity, and his soul's good in view.

Rule 3.—Placing myself in the position of one about to die, I should ask myself how much and in what way

I should wish to apportion the alms which are at my disposal.

Rule 4.—I should further ask myself what I shall wish to have done in this respect when I shall appear before the judgment-seat of God, to give an account of my actions.

Rule 5.—If I feel that I am influenced unduly by natural affection or inclination, I should withhold my action until, having pondered well over the four preceding rules, examining and testing my motives by means of them, I have brought my feelings within the bounds prescribed by faith and sound reason; so as not to allow myself to be influenced by flesh and blood, or any mere worldly considerations.

Rule 6.—The same rules ought to be applied by me in regard of the amount of money to be reserved for my own use.

Rule 7.—In determining this last point, I must consider my condition and state, and also my circumstances and relations with others. I should put before myself by way of example, Joachim and Anna, who reserved one-third of their income for themselves, whilst they divided the rest between the poor and the Temple. Of our Lord it is said, that though even the birds had nests, the Son of Man had not whereon to lay His Head, making thus a sacrifice of all things as an example to others.

N.B.—These rules may likewise be applied to different works of charity and zeal. In fact, whenever we feel impelled by natural affection and inclination to take any step, even though good in itself, the application of the same rules will be of great service to us.

RULES FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE SCRUPULOUS.

Another document in the Spiritual Exercises concerns scruples, on which subject St. Ignatius lays down six rules.[1]

Rule 1.—The name of scruple is vulgarly applied to what proceeds from our own judgment and free-will: *v.g.*, when I freely judge that to be a sin which is not a sin; which happens, for example, when any one having accidentally trodden on a cross formed by two straws, of his own accord judges that he has sinned: and this is properly an erroneous judgment, not a real scruple.

Rule 2.—After I have trodden upon that cross, or after I have thought, said, or done something, there comes to me from without the thought that I have sinned, and on the other hand it seems to me that I have not sinned, and still I feel some disturbance from this, inasmuch as I do doubt and yet I do not doubt; this is properly a scruple, and a temptation suggested by the enemy.

In these two rules we are taught the difference between an erroneous conscience and a scrupulous conscience. The first occurs when being misled by our ignorance of what constitutes a sin we pronounce within ourselves and of our own accord that to be a sin which is no sin. The second occurs when, a thing having been done, we admit an after-thought and impression that we have knowingly given our consent to something sinful. Our judgment shows us that there was probably no sin, but still we remain in a state of doubt and perplexity which prevents our coming to any definite or practical decision. Such is the state of scrupulosity, and it is either induced by the devil as a temptation or suggested by an overwrought or unhealthy imagination.

From this it follows that we should act firmly and

[1] Conf. Suarez, lib. ix. c. vii. n. 3.

reject the scruple at once. In thus doing we apply the remedy all the sooner, and avoid many extravagant and pernicious blunders.

Rule 3.—Erroneous judgments must be corrected and laid aside as being false and having nothing but harm in them. Scruples, however, may for a short time be turned to good account, inasmuch as they tend to cleanse and purify the soul, for, as St. Gregory says, "It is the nature of well-disposed souls to see faults where in reality there are none."

Rule 4.—The enemy observes very narrowly whether the soul be gross or delicate; and if it is delicate he strives to make it delicate to an extreme, that he may the more easily disturb and ruin it: *v.g.*, if he sees a soul consents to no sin, neither mortal nor venial, nor even any appearance of deliberate sin, then the enemy, since he cannot cause it to fall into what has the appearance of sin, contrives to make it judge that there is sin where there is not, as in some word or insignificant thought. If the soul is gross, the enemy contrives to render it still more gross: *v.g.*, if before it made no account of venial sins, he will contrive now that it make little account of mortal sins; and if before it made some account of committing mortal sins, now he will contrive that it think little or nothing of doing so.

In this rule are exposed the methods of the devil and his wiles, and the way of frustrating them. For if he finds a conscience too delicate and timid, he strives to make it more so by filling it with apprehensions, sophisms, plausible reasonings, and a tempest of scruples; but if he finds it lax and careless, he endeavours to blunt it still more that it may by degrees make little or no account of grievous sins.

Rule 5.—Wherefore, whoever desires to advance in virtue and the way of perfection, must in the first case dilate and enlarge his heart with a holy liberty of spirit and confidence; but in the second case, he must incline to greater strictness and exactness of conscience. Thus, avoiding both extremes he will establish himself in the

happy medium in which he will enjoy perfect peace of mind.

Rule 6.—Finally, in our daily actions, when we are going to say or do anything which sure and safe principles, the example of virtuous persons, or the advice of our spiritual guides satisfy us to be good and right, should perchance any scrupulous thought arise to deter or withdraw us from it, we ought to despise such suggestion and, raising up our mind to God, go forward in all simplicity.

NOTE.—When a scrupulous person judges a thing to be unlawful on light grounds, or suspects it to be unlawful without any good reason, he should implicitly obey his director.

In dealing with such souls, a director must not show any fear or doubt whether there may have been sin; nor should he appear to hesitate in his replies, but should act with calmness and firmness. Repressing all impatience, he should be kind and patient. It is imprudent to try to reason with his penitent, because the latter is in his present state incapable of reasoning, and the attempt only increases his confusion of mind.

RESOLUTION TO IMITATE JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE SECOND FORM OF ELECTION.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves alone in the presence of God, that we may consider the end for which we were created, that is, "to be made like to the image of His Son."

Prelude 2.—Let us beg of Him to enlighten our minds that we may know wherein we fail in this likeness to our Blessed Lord, and to inflame our will that we may resolve at once to correct our faults.

First Point.—The end then of all our thoughts, words, and actions, the object of our most earnest desires and efforts, should be to make ourselves as far as possible by God's grace like to Jesus Christ. No end can be more worthy or more ennobling than this: and the strongest of all possible motives are constantly urging us to attain it. In the first place it is the will of His Divine Majesty,[1] and in executing that will we promote His glory, we please His Divine Majesty, and give honour to His well-beloved Son. Such motive were enough to make us firmly resolve to strive to imitate Him to the best of our ability in the exercise of poverty, humility, and self-denial.

A second motive will be that I may thus prove my gratitude to God. Does not the thought cut one to the heart that after all Jesus Christ has done in His love for us, we, being so infinitely below Him, can offer such a poor return, even by the sacrifice of life itself. Well! let us do the best we can; let us often say, "You, O Lord, have done so much for love of me, I will do this at least for love of you."

Another motive is that by this means we secure our salvation; seeing that imitation of Jesus Christ is a mark of predestination, and is also a means of promoting the sanctification of our neighbour.

Second Point.—Suppose that another had been specially placed under my direction by God, and that I should undoubtedly be called to render an account of the advice I had given him, what would be the nature of that advice? Should I recommend a poverty well furnished with comforts and conveniences? Should I advise an easy life, admitting every kind of lawful liberty and gratification of the senses? Should I advise him to court the notice and admiration of others, or to seek posts of honour? Would I not rather urge him to form himself, as far as possible, on the type of Jesus Christ

[1] "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren." (Romans viii. 29.)

our Lord in all these respects, and more especially as to those very points in which he felt himself most defective? Then, if so, we are bound to act in the very same way ourselves.

Third Point.—Again, when I am lying upon my death-bed, shall I be satisfied to have lived an ordinary trivial life, barely exempt from mortal sin and from certain venial offences? What sentiments shall I then have in respect of the conveniences and broad views I now take of poverty, of anxieties and fatigues willingly endured by me in order to shine and make a mark by my learning and talents? In that hour we are left alone with only a crucifix in our hands, to remind us that our only consolation then can be to have lived with Christ on the Cross, to have become with Him dead to the world, and to the world crucified.

Fourth Point.—What will be my feelings when I stand before the judgment-seat? What shall I then think of the facility with which I at present violate my Rules or neglect the duties of my state? How view my indifference to the frequent graces and inspirations of God? my avidity to gain a little applause and esteem, my envious and bitter speeches respecting others, the dislike I feel for particular persons? Alas! absence of all resemblance between my life and that of Jesus Christ should fill me with horror and dismay! If I wish to be considered a companion of Christ, I must distinctly and without delay begin to do the works of Christ, and clothe myself interiorly and exteriorly with Christ, "putting on the mind which was in Him." Let me seriously study what are the chief faults in me which mar that imitation, and what virtues of which our Lord has set us the example are most defective in me, and come what will, cost what it may, let me resolve at once to correct the one and to strain every nerve to acquire the other. This may be my last opportunity of making such a resolution.

Let us conclude with three colloquies, to our Lady, to Jesus Christ, and to the Eternal Father, begging of

them the grace to make this resolution, and furthermore the grace to keep it.[1]

We may also apply the first form of Election to the same subject, in order to determine to what especial virtue in our Blessed Lord we should point our desire to imitate Him, and what particular fault opposed to it we should select for correction between this and our next retreat or act of Election. The advantages of making this exercise from time to time during the course of the year are inestimable. It has much influence in forming and moulding our character, and especially in supernaturalizing it.

JESUS TEMPTED IN THE DESERT.[2]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us call to mind how Jesus after His Baptism withdrew into the desert, how He fasted for forty days and at the end overcame the temptations of the devil.

[1] "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself for me." (Galat. ii. 20.)

[2] "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. . . . And the tempter coming, said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered, and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the Holy City, and set Him upon a pinnacle of the Temple, and said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, That He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him: It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him, and behold angels came and ministered to Him." (St. Matt. iv. 1—11. Comp. St. Mark i.; St. Luke iv.)

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the desert on the west of the Jordan, as the haunt of birds of prey and wild animals.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we want, namely, to know Jesus and the lessons He teaches us in this mystery, and to imitate Him more closely, especially His spirit of prayer, mortification, courage, and humility.

First Point.—Jesus is led into the desert, far from the crowd which had witnessed the wonderful testimony borne from Heaven to His mission, and thus teaches us how to fly from occasions of vainglory. Solitude favours the study of truth, encourages good thoughts, allays the tumult of our passions and affections, and facilitates converse with God; moreover, Jesus wishes by penance and prayer to prepare Himself for His great mission. Let us learn to love solitude, and as far as possible and is consistent with our duties, to fly from the conversation of men, *Quoties inter homines fui, minus homo redii*. How sad it is to think that retirement for a few days' retreat is to us a terrible and weary trial! Jesus spends the days and nights in prayer, but we who have so great cause for prayer, can hardly endure for one short hour. He who had no rebellious flesh to subdue, would teach us how to mortify our sensual appetites and practise temperance in eating and drinking. Let us learn to imitate Him in these two respects, and thereby do penance for our neglect of them in the past, and obtain grace and strength to overcome the temptations which may await us in the future.

Second Point.—Jesus was tempted. The Son of God was tempted! Let us adore His profound humility in demeaning Himself so low as to submit to be thus insulted by the devil! And this He does for our sake and instruction, and to win grace for us that we also may overcome; teaching us to stand always in justice and fear, and to prepare our souls for temptation,[1] because the devil like a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour.[2] We must imitate Jesus Christ, if we would

[1] Ecclus. ii. 1. [2] 1 St. Peter v.

have grace to overcome. And let us not be surprised at our temptations. He allowed Himself to be tempted to *gluttony*, then to *vanity* and *vainglory*, and lastly to *avarice!* If we are to be acceptable to God, it is necessary that temptation should try us,[1] and we shall undoubtedly be tried, it may be by gross and revolting temptations; let us however fear nothing, but treat the devil with cool contempt and he will fly from us.[2] Let us not, like Eve, enter into parley with our enemy, but promptly repel him; let us call to mind the precepts of God, and by such supernatural helps gain strength to obey the promptings of our natural reason. If you argue with the devil, he will overcome you by the cunning of his sophistries. Let us note how cleverly he flatters, deceives, and cajoles us! how he tries to lure us on to love and hope for things earthly and carnal, and the indulgence of our passions, and this often by false and vain promises, which it is not in his power to fulfil. Yet, let us not fear him, for he cannot harm us unless we allow him to do so, seeing that the grace of God, which will never be wanting to us, is more powerful than the combined forces of the infernal spirits.

Third Point.—Angels came and ministered to Him. Thus the Eternal Father did honour to the victory of His Son by sending His angels to congratulate Him. As regards ourselves also, trials and temptations are soon over, and are succeeded by heavenly peace and consolations. Woe to us if we lose heart and mistrust our God. Lack of confidence begets weakness. We must on no account fear; through Jesus we shall overcome; and every act of resistance, every call upon Divine help will merit for us a crown of glory in Heaven. Wherefore, no matter how long the struggle, nor how often it may be repeated, though one kind of temptation be succeeded by another, let us never be disheartened. The only thing to fear is the danger of presumption, and of attributing

[1] Tobias xii. 13.

[2] "Be subject therefore to God, but resist the devil, and he will fly from you." (St. James iv. 7.)

to ourselves the victory which belongs to the grace of God alone. Let us remark the expression of St. Luke, "*the devil departed from Him for a time*," that is, to return again later. So must we too be ever on the alert. We may conquer, but we must be prepared for a return of the devil. The life of a Christian is a perpetual warfare, and as long as we have life we are liable to fresh attacks; let us, however, encourage ourselves with the thought, that the strife is but for a few fleeting years, and it will then be succeeded by an eternity of peace and glory.

Let us, in conclusion, thank our Blessed Lord that for our sake and for our example He has condescended to be tempted; let us feel confounded and ashamed at our cowardice before an enemy whose sole resources are drawn from the faint-heartedness of man, and who is like a lion only when he sees that we are as timorous as the hare, and let us be resolved to watch, and by prayer and fasting secure the victory. End with the "Our Father."

If time allows we should make a double repetition of the meditations on the Baptism and Temptation of our Lord; as also an application of the senses to the same mysteries.

THE MIRACLE OF CANA IN GALILEE.[1]

NOTE.—Various reasons are assigned by different writers, why our Lord would be present at the marriage-feast in Cana. Thus it is said that He wished to show honour to His relatives, and to sanctify the wedding by His presence. This supposes that the bridegroom on

[1] "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them:

the occasion was no other than Simon the son of Cleophas, and nephew of St. Joseph, who on witnessing the miracle followed Christ and became one of the twelve.[1] A second motive alleged is that He might give His Apostles an example of humility, by being present at the humble feast, and might at the same time show by the miracle His esteem for poverty, and desire to save His host from confusion. A third reason suggested is, that He might show His disciples He was the true Messias by the miracle of converting water into wine.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The history, in brief, is that our Lord and His Blessed Mother were invited to a wedding, in the poor village of Cana: and that some of the first disciples of Jesus were present with them. After He had wrought the miracle His disciples believed in Him.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the humble dwelling, the company present, Mary, Jesus, the first disciples.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we really desire, that is, to know our dear Lord more clearly and to love Him more sincerely, and let us ask Him to show His power and generosity in our regard, by changing our hearts and making them more like to His.

First Point.—Christ is invited with His disciples to the wedding. Never was wedding-feast so distinguished as this, in being honoured by the presence of the King of kings and His Mother, the Lady and mistress of the world (*domina mundi*); and yet everything bespoke poverty, simplicity, and humility. Let us admire Jesus who makes Himself all to all, and fills all with peace and

Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry it to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when he had tasted the water made wine and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee: and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." (St. John ii. 1—11.)

[1] Baron. *Hist.* bk. viii.

spiritual joy; His every word and action is stamped with a modest, amiable, and simple dignity, and His mind and Heart ever preserves His close communication with the Father. Let us dwell upon His undoubted abstemiousness, especially in regard of wine and such delicacies as were provided.

His Blessed Mother and the other women with quiet assiduity administer to the guests, striving to anticipate their wants, and to promote the happiness of all. With what calm and unaffected modesty our Lady moves about, with what sweetness and recollection she arranges for the comfort of each, and with what delight she discharges the humble duties of a handmaid. Let us take to heart the lessons thus given to us by Jesus and Mary, and at our meals let us practise His abstemiousness and mortification, His modesty, recollection, and charity, leaving the best things for others and taking the worst for ourselves; repressing over-eagerness and rudeness; whilst at the same time with simplicity and true humility we equally avoid all affectation of manner.

Second Point.—Mary intimates to her Son the failure of wine. Consider how the loving heart of our Lady is moved with compassion when she perceives that the wine is failing; she sees how the poor hostess is nervous and ashamed, not knowing what is to be done. At once, with all the tenderness of a mother, and full confidence in the sympathy of Jesus, she gently whispers to Him that there is no more wine; and then tells those who waited at table to do whatever Jesus might bid them. She makes no request of her Son, knowing well that His tender and loving Heart will prompt Him to save His hosts any feeling of confusion or shame. Oh! would to God we knew the Sacred Heart as Mary knew It! With how great confidence should we then approach Him in all our wants, and with what success, even though His hour for help was not yet come. We may also consider how our dear Lord willed that this incident should be recorded to convince us of the power which He had granted our Lady over Him, even in His Divine Nature; and also

to teach us that through her we may obtain all we ask, seeing that He can refuse nothing to her: for, as St. Bernard says, "God hath so willed it, that we should have all things through Mary." Let us consider the reverence, benevolence, and charity of our Lord's remark to His Mother, when she drew His attention to the wine having run short. "Woman (Lady), what matters it to thee and Me?" I had determined that My first miracle should not refer to temporal things, but I will, out of reverence, anticipate the hour, and manifest My Divine power. In regard to the work of My Father which I do, I must obey Him, but as to My works as thy Son, in all these I am subject to thee; yet knowing thy good pleasure, I will do this work of My Father, who is in Heaven. It was thus she understood Him whom she knew perfectly, and therefore did she give her directions to those who served at table. Let us beg through Mary that we too may know His Sacred Heart more and more intimately, that along with her we may love It more ardently, and may confide in It more perfectly.

Third Point.—Jesus changed the water into wine. At our Lord's bidding, the six large vessels were filled with water, and immediately, by His almighty power, He changed their contents into wine. Then were all present struck with wonder, and with feelings of great joy and gratitude. Let us contemplate the profound awe with which they now regarded the modest and humble person of the Saviour; how by this miracle their minds were enlightened so that they recognized His Divine power, and their hearts were inflamed with love at His delicate consideration for His hosts, at His generous charity towards their guests. For Himself He would refuse to exert His power, nor will He do aught to assuage His thirst; it is only when the comfort, pleasure, or benefit of others is concerned, that He will manifest His absolute control over the laws of nature. But what is the conversion of water into wine compared with that which we daily witness, the conversion of wine into His own sacred and living Blood! at the divine nuptial-feast in which by

receiving Him we become one flesh, one blood with Him! Yet how little awe do we feel, how scanty our reverence or love, how little the gratitude which we show to Him. It cost Him, in truth, but the smallest expression of His will to work this first miracle, but no created intellect can conceive the price He has paid, the sufferings He has undergone, or the humiliations which He has to bear in giving us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to be our drink.

O my soul, how often does the wine of holy charity and devotion run short in us, how cold and indifferent are we, with what poor preparation do we present ourselves at the sacred banquet when we ascend to the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice or to receive Holy Communion! Let us fly to Mary, let us beg of her to spare our confusion and shame, while she herself suggests our necessities to her Son, telling Him that we have no wine. She will not fail us, she will at least, provided only we fly to her with humility and confidence, prove a Mother to us, for she is merciful and the Mother of Mercy.

In our colloquy let us humbly beg of our Lady to represent our wants to Jesus, asking Him to change our hearts and make them more like His own, that we may love what He loved, namely, poverty, sufferings, and humiliations.

Let us also ask of Jesus to present the same petition to His Eternal Father; and finally, let us ourselves earnestly request the same of our Father in Heaven.

CHRIST DRIVES THE SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—A brief recapitulation of the history.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the court of the Gentiles within the enclosure of the Temple.

[1] "And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem; and He found in the Temple them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. And when He had made as it were a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple,

Prelude 3.—Let us pray from our hearts that we may understand the spirit manifested by our Lord in this mystery, and may have grace to imitate it when God's glory or our neighbour's salvation requires this.

First Point.—Jesus drives the sellers out of the Temple. Through the negligence, indifference, and avarice of the priests, those that sold oxen, sheep, goats, and doves had presumed to plant their stalls and pens within the sacred precincts of the Temple: there, too, the money-changers had their tables covered with coins of different countries for the convenience of distant purchasers. We may easily imagine the crush and confusion, and the babel of sounds, the lowing of oxen, mixed up with the bleating of goats and sheep, the cries of those tending them, as well as of buyers and sellers. We are told that the noise was often so great that the voices of the priests could not be heard; and yet all this desecration was permitted in order to swell the gains of the priests. Jesus suddenly appears in their midst, filled with holy indignation at the scene which met His eyes, at the venality of those who offered up worship to His Heavenly Father, and at the insult passed upon His Divine Majesty. Armed with some pieces of rope He proceeds to drive them from His presence, and overturns the tables of the money-changers, scattering their coins on the ground; whereas those men who were selling doves He admonishes, says St. Ignatius, in the gentle words, Take these away; thus showing His pity and compassion for the poor who knew no better, who had either been misled by others or misinterpreted the silence of the priests, and at whose door therefore lay all the blame.

So great was the jealousy of God for the honour of His Temple, as He had already proved, for instance, in the case of Heliodorus[1] and of Rabsaces.[2]

the sheep also and the oxen; and the money also of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew. And to them that sold doves He said: Take these things hence, and make not the house of My Father a house of traffic." (St. John ii. 13—16.)

[1] 2 Mach. iii. 24—40. [2] 4 Kings xviii. xix.

Yet what was the dignity of the Temple when compared with that of our churches, in which the Thrice Holy deigns to take up His abode, night and day, and in which His Life is perpetuated and renewed; where the Divine Word, begotten before all ages, and by whom all things were made, the King of glory, conceals His infinite majesty and His lovely and all glorious Humanity beneath the sacramental veils. Should not this manifestation of divine condescension and love intensify our admiration, our adoration and our love? Seeing then that we most truly possess this Divine Presence, with how great reverence and respect should we enter the house of God; how gladly should we respond to His invitation to come and find consolation and peace with Him when weary and heavily laden,[1] and to draw water of joy when we suffer thirst.[2]

Let us then fully enter into the feelings of the Psalmist, "How dear to my heart are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts; better is one day in Thy courts, O Lord, above thousands."[3]

Second Point.—Jesus overturned the tables of the rich money-changers. Here St. Ignatius contrasts the conduct of our Lord towards the rich with that towards the poor. These rich money-changers were usurers and robbers, slaves to an inordinate love of money, who to satisfy their craving for gain, violated without hesitation the laws of justice and charity. From the manner in which our Lord treats them we see in what horror He held them, and may learn with what severity He will judge them on the great Day of Judgment. He also practically declared Himself to be the Lord and Master of all things: nor did any one dare to resist Him, but only asked for an explanation why He so acted. His reply was an appeal to the mystery of His future Resurrection—"Destroy this Temple and in three days I will build it up again," thus justifying His action by His Divine power and authority.

Let us admire the fortitude and energy of Jesus in

[1] St. Matt. xi. 28. [2] Isaias lv. 1. [3] Psalm lxxxiii. 2, 11.

upholding the honour of His Father and defending the holiness of the Temple in the face of the Pharisees and priests, who He knows will put Him to a cruel death. Let us learn too a lesson from our King and Captain, not to fear the rich and powerful when it is a question of defending the cause of God or His Church, but to inculcate unflinchingly the Divine principles and commands, even though death be the result.

Third Point.—He spoke also to the poor dove sellers, addressing them with great meekness and bidding them take their doves away, and not turn His Father's house into a house of traffic. In this way does He show His predilection for them, having Himself, for our sakes, chosen to be poor when He might have been rich, to come into the world in a ruined stable, and to pass naked out of the world on a Cross. They were alarmed when they saw Him treat the rich with such implacable severity, but quickly recovered their peace of mind on beholding Him advance towards them with calm and condescending gentleness: and listened gladly to His admonitions and to the reasons He gave for His conduct. His sweet and loving Heart opened its treasures to them, and they at once complied without a murmur. He would give us also a lesson how to treat the poor. That man assuredly has not the spirit of Jesus Christ in him who courts the society of the great and wealthy, who sacrifices his principles and his duty rather than give them offence, or who glories in their acquaintance: he alone has it who loves and esteems the poor, treats them with gentleness, and labours to instruct and elevate them, seeing Jesus dwelling in them. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, as long as you have done it to one of the least of My brethren, you have done it unto Me."[1] It is true that both rich and poor are made to the likeness of God, are the adopted children of God, are redeemed by the life-blood of Jesus, and are called to the possession of eternal glory, and consequently are to be treated with due honour, respect, and love, but it is a sad error to cultivate the

[1] St. Matt. xxv. 40.

favour of the rich, the great, and the powerful, at the expense or neglect of the poor, who stand more in need of our charity, of our encouragement, our counsel and our sympathy.

Let us copy then from our Blessed Lord an ardent zeal for the promotion of God's glory, fearlessness in defending His honour, great reverence in His holy temple, great care in the divinely established services of religion. Let us learn love of the poor, who are Christ's substitutes, and let us treat them with patience and reverence, for His sake.

Conclude with a fervent colloquy addressed to our Blessed Lord, and repeat the "Our Father."

THE CALL OF THE APOSTLES.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us contemplate how Jesus comes forth from the desert, selects His companions, and destines them to become His Apostles.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the scenes of Galilee and the shores of Genezareth.

Prelude 3.—We should then beg what we desire, an intimate knowledge of the Heart of Jesus Christ, in order that through love of Him we may imitate His example.

First Point.—Peter and Andrew were called first to a

[1] "The next day again John stood, and two of his disciples. And beholding Jesus walking, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples asked Jesus, Where dwellest Thou? . . . He saith to them: Come and see. They came and saw where He abode, and they stayed with Him that day. Now it was about the tenth hour. And Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who had heard of John, and followed Him. He findeth first his brother Simon and saith to him, We have found the Messias; and he brought him to Jesus. And Jesus, looking upon him, said: Thou art Simon, the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is interpreted Peter. On the following day He would go forth into Galilee, and He findeth Philip. And Jesus saith to him: Follow Me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him: We have found

certain acquaintance with Jesus;[1] secondly, to the resolution of following Him, though meantime they were to return to their own employment;[2] thirdly, to an absolute and continuous following of Him.[3] God can call us without any previous disposition on our part, but generally by the gifts which He has bestowed on us, be they natural or virtues infused or acquired, He gradually prepares us to follow His call. So it was as regards Andrew, who in his first meeting with Jesus was inflamed with such love and zeal for Him, that he introduced to Him his brother Peter, upon whom Jesus gazed and to whom He assigned his future career. Later on, from Peter's boat He addresses the crowd, and asks the brothers, after He had spoken, to follow Him. Finally, He commands them to follow Him at once. Upon this they abandon every earthly tie—home, family, and friends, that they may join Him, never even by death to be again separated from Him.

What a lesson for us! Is there no sacrifice which our Lord calls upon me to make, no tie to be broken, no affection to be rooted out, in order that I may follow Him perfectly in my state of life? Does He not call upon me to make greater efforts than I have hitherto made, to acquire a more perfect detachment from carnal and sensual things, a more perfect hatred of the spirit

Him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth. And Nathanael said to him: Can anything of good come from Nazareth? Philip said to him: Come and see. . . . Nathanael answered Him, and said: Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." (St. John i. 35—49.) "And passing by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting nets into the sea, and Jesus said to them: Come after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And immediately leaving their nets they followed Him. And going on from thence a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were mending their nets in the ship: and forthwith He called them. And leaving their father Zebedee in the ship with his hired men, they followed Him." (St. Mark i. 16—20.) "And when Jesus passed on from thence, He saw a man sitting in the custom-house named Matthew, and He said to him: Follow Me. And he rose up and followed Him." (St. Matt. ix. 9.)

[1] St. John i. 35—42. [2] St. Luke v. 2—10. [3] St. Matt. v. 18.

and maxims of the children of the world? We have resolved to respond to His call, and have made it the subject of election. May then His grace enable us to imitate the example of Andrew and Peter, and may it be said of us at the last that "leaving all things they followed Him," and may it be said in all truth.

Second Point.—Jesus also called Philip[1] and Matthew[2] and James and John.[3] Our Lord calls them in the same spirit of love and free invitation, and meets with equal spontaneity, promptitude, and generosity. Long and inveterate habits, strong earthly affections, divergences of character, all yield cheerfully and readily to the sweet and gentle call of Christ.

So also if we only generously correspond to the appeal which our Lord makes to us during this retreat, we shall find that neither rooted habits nor natural repugnances will hinder the efficacy of God's grace, and hence we can say with St. Paul, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."[4]

As regards the other Apostles, whose vocation is not mentioned in the Gospels, we see how much they differed in character, position, habits, and gifts; yet by God's grace they were all, except Judas, moulded after the same high vocation, proving to us the omnipotent power of God's grace. Let this fill us with unbounded confidence in God, who "is faithful, by whom we are called to the Society of His Son," and make us resolve to respond to His vocation by the fidelity with which we adhere to the decision we came to in our election. The grace for this will not be wanting to us if only we persevere in prayer and in the imitation of our Lord.

Third Point.—(*a*) The Apostles were of a humble condition; for, while the worldly-wise are careful to choose the means most fitted for the end they have in view, God, on the contrary, makes choice of means apparently least suited and quite out of all proportion to the end before Him. Thus in His Apostles there was no culture,

[1] St. John i. 43, 44. [2] St. Matt. ix. 9. [3] St. Matt. iv. 21, 22.
[4] Philipp. iv. 13.

no distinction of birth, no wealth; they were, on the contrary, poor, rude, illiterate fishermen. This He did to convince us that all was His own work, and to leave no ground for self-conceit.[1] Let us then not take any credit to ourselves if He has chosen us to do any work for His praise and glory. (β) Yet were they called to an *exalted dignity* — to the dignity of intimate friendship and companionship with Christ, and of being His colleagues in the work of His Father, founders and pillars of His Church, dispensers of His mysteries. There is no earthly dignity to compare with this, no matter how glorious or exalted it may be. (γ) They received gifts and graces, by which they were raised above all the Fathers both of the Old and New Law. They were endowed with the spirit of wisdom and fortitude, the gift of miracles and tongues, and the power to conquer the great idolatrous world and all its powerful princes, and even the devil himself. And we may rest assured that God will generously grant to us also those graces which are requisite to carry out the duties of that state of life to which He has called us.

Let us pray for this in the triple colloquy, which we made after the meditation on the "Three Classes of Men;" and conclude with the "Our Father."

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus Christ ascends the mountain in Galilee, followed by a large crowd, and gathering His chosen disciples round Him, makes a discourse to them.[2]

[1] "But the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath He chosen, that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world and things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He may bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His sight." (1 Cor. i. 27.)

[2] St. Matt. v. 1—48.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture the scene in our imagination.

Prelude 3.—We must here beg what we want, namely, light to grasp the doctrine of Jesus and grace to reduce it fully to practice.

First Point.—Jesus pronounces the *Eight Beatitudes*.[1] The crowd had followed Him to witness His miracles and to hear His words. After He had healed their sick, exorcized those who were possessed, and had taught them, He ascended higher up the mountain, and addressed special instructions to His Apostles. Let us join them that we also may be illuminated.[2] Like a king in the midst of his subjects, or a father amongst his family, "solemnly raising His eyes, He opens His mouth to teach them." Thus did He draw attention to the gravity of the occasion and the importance of His discourse.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, they that mourn, that hunger and thirst after justice, the merciful, the peacemakers, and they that suffer persecution. Of these lessons, *three* relate to that perfect abnegation to which we were pledged in the "Kingdom of Christ," namely, poverty, mourning, and persecution for justice' sake; *three* include our conduct to our neighbour, meekness, mercy, and peacemaking; the other *two* regard more immediately our relations with God, cleanness of heart and hunger after justice. Let us consider each of these, their depth of meaning, the examples of each left us by Jesus Christ, and the reward attached to them.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the

[1] "And opening His mouth He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful; for they shall find mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." (St. Matt. v. 2—10.)

[2] "Come ye to Him and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded." (Psalm xxxiii. 6.)

Kingdom of Heaven." They are blessed, for they are the objects of the special love and interest of Jesus Christ, they are in a station more like His own, they are less exposed to danger and temptations, are on the right road to eternal beatitude. Yet this blessing is not for those who suffer privation from necessity and against their will, but only for such as cheerfully accept of their hard lot, or who through love of God have voluntarily made themselves poor in effect, or have detached themselves from their possessions, and whom we considered in the third of the "Three Classes."

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." Closely connected with poverty is the virtue of meekness. The meek keep under control their feelings of impatience, anger, or vindictiveness; accept with calmness and resignation injury or opposition from their fellow-men, confiding in the fatherly providence of God, and directing all things that happen to His glory and their own salvation. Of this virtue our Lord proposes Himself as our model—"Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart"[1]—and as an example to us, when He accepted the kiss of Judas, forgave, for our imitation, Peter's denial of Him, pardoned the thief on the Cross, and prayed His Heavenly Father to forgive His executioners. The meek shall hereafter possess the Kingdom of Heaven, and already in this life they possess their souls in peace.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." This blessing is not given to all who mourn, for then who would not be in comfort and consolation! It is bestowed only on those who in sorrow and resignation accept their trials, who bewail their own and other's sins, who maintain a ceaseless strife against their flesh and its concupiscences, and who are faithful in the times of desolation and persecution, &c. These shall be comforted in the next world by the enjoyment of "the future glory which shall be revealed in them,"[2] and because in the present life also their love of God will

[1] St. Matt. xi. 29. [2] Romans viii. 18.

make those things sweet to them which human nature regards as sad and bitter.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill." They who hunger and thirst after habitual justice by which they are sanctified, and after actual justice in the actions which they perform, are ever strenuous in the exercise of virtue, aspire to that which is perfect, and strive to unite themselves more and more closely with our Lord by a lively faith and ardent charity, and by frequent Holy Communions. It is to these that a rich abundance of supernatural gifts and graces is promised: and "He filleth them with good things."[1]

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy." That man is merciful or pitiful of heart who loves and assists those that are wretched, whether they suffer exteriorly or interiorly; but this mercifulness must rest on a supernatural basis, and be exercised for God's sake if it is to secure the blessing. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is the teaching of Jesus Christ;[2] but the world reverses this divine saying, by its maxim that it is "Happier to get than give." Our eternal lot is to be decided by our mercifulness; for it is by charity, the mother of mercy, that "a multitude of sins is covered."[3] The merciful even in this life are led by God's grace to seek remission of their sins, and in the next are made partakers of eternal mercy.

"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." The clean of heart are, first, all those who are not conscious to themselves of mortal sin unrepented of; secondly, those who are free from venial sin, which stains the soul, disposes to mortal sin, and removes us, so to speak, to a distance from God; and thirdly, those who seek in all things only the will of God and His service and praise. They shall see God face to face with special clearness in the next life, and also in this life shall be blessed with a pure and keen knowledge of His

[1] St. Matt. i. 55. [2] Acts xx. 35. [3] 1 St. Peter iv. 8.

perfections. Thus it was with St. John the Baptist and with that other John whom Jesus loved.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." This term indicates those who are meek and show themselves amiable and gentle to all, who avoid giving offence to others, unless it be in a good and just cause. Such too are they who smooth down quarrels, reconcile persons at variance, and strive to induce men to seek reconciliation with God, and with Jesus, the Prince of Peace, who brought peace into the world to all men of good-will. These are called and are in reality sons of God by adoption and brothers of Jesus Christ through grace,[1] and are most dear to Him who came down from Heaven to establish this peace.

"Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." To do bravely is to be a hero, but to suffer greatly and patiently is to be a Christian, seeing that to suffer is in general far harder than to do; whence we may say that of all Beatitudes this carries off the palm. To have to endure injuries, contempt, pain, and death for the sake of duty and of religion, or because we observe the laws of God, this is full of merit. Such persecutions separate us from the world and drive us to God, they make us like to our great original, and force us to seek consolation from above. It was for this reason St. Ignatius prayed that there never might be a time in which his Society should be without suffering and persecution.

Let us examine ourselves and see how much we have been wanting in our efforts to secure the blessings here promised; let us make acts of sorrow for our past negligence, and strengthen them by adding firm resolutions to strive more earnestly for the future.

Second Point.—Jesus exhorts them to a right use of their talents.[2] Mark the astonishment of the Apostles on

[1] Galat. iv. 7.

[2] "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out and to be trodden on by men. You are the light of the world. . . . So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." (St. Matt. v. 13—16.)

hearing truths which had been concealed from the wise ones of the world, and at the same time the modesty, seriousness, and avidity with which they listen, as in this second part of His discourse He treats of the three-fold duties of an Apostle. "*You are the salt of the earth.*" Salt gives flavour to food and preserves it from corruption; so you by the sanctity of your conduct and teaching, and by your efficacy in prayer, are called to save others from corruption. If these two qualities be absent, we are fit for nothing. "*You are the light of the world,*" in order that by your teaching you may dispel error, sin, and ignorance. Hence recognize the necessity of acquiring not only a theoretical, but also a practical knowledge of the science of the saints; since to have the former without the latter is to be like a tinkling cymbal. "*You are as a city seated upon a mountain.*" It is the duty and office of the real apostle to gather round him a society of men bound together by the bonds of charity and united in their views and in the prosecution of good, leading a holy life, raised above sublunary things, and persevering with the firmness and constancy which is figured by the mountain. So must we become all to all men, that by our charity and self-devotion we may gain all to Christ.

Third Point.—In the third part of His discourse, Jesus pronounces the wisdom of the world to be folly. Better is it to be a fool with Christ than to be worldly-wise.[1] He came to perfect, not to destroy the Law, and this He does by requiring not only external observance, but the interior worship and service of the heart; and further, by enjoining the practice of the Evangelical Counsels. He requires us to abstain not only from acts of external violence, but also from anger towards our neighbour; not only from acts of impurity, but also from any deliberate thought, word, or desire against the virtue of chastity; not only from perjury, but also from all swearing;

[1] "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain" (1 Cor. iii. 19.)

and lastly, it will not suffice henceforth to love our neighbour only, but we must go still further: we must love our very enemies, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who persecute us or calumniate us, and do all kinds of evil things against us. To the wise ones of this world, all we have said above is mere folly, whereas the infinite wisdom of God commands it. Let us take these lessons to heart, and examine how far we have reduced them to practice.

In whatever state we may be, whether ecclesiastical or religious, whether in domestic life or as holding authority, we are bound in due proportion to form ourselves according to the principle of the Beatitudes; we are to answer to the similitude of salt, or of light, and may not in the observance of the law satisfy ourselves with simple external compliance, but must observe it in spirit and in truth. How far are we convinced of these obligations? In how much have we failed, and thus have to confess with shame that we have been rather a source of scandal or bad example, than a cause of edification.

Let us in our colloquy pray for grace to correct what has been faulty, and to adopt with greater earnestness the means necessary for our amendment, means by which we may correct ourselves. End with the "Our Father."

OUR LORD STILLS THE STORM AT SEA.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Whilst the Apostles were passing over the Sea of Galilee and Jesus calmly slept, there came on

[1] "And when He entered into the boat the disciples followed Him. And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And they came to Him, and awaked Him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them, O ye of little faith. Then rising up He commanded the winds and the waves, and there came a great calm." (St. Matt. viii. 23—26.)

"They take Him even as He was in the ship, and there were other ships with Him. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves

a fearful tempest. When His disciples in their terror awoke Him, He rebuked them for their want of faith, but He commanded the winds and the waves to be at rest, and forthwith came on a perfect calm, to the amazement of all present.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the scene around, and the attendant circumstances.

Prelude 3.—Beg earnestly to know our dear Lord as He manifests Himself in this mystery, that we may love and admire Him more ardently and may put our whole trust in Him.

First Point.—Our Lord was asleep when the tempest overtook the disciples and their boat. He had been engaged in instructing the crowd on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, with His usual zeal, simplicity, and fervour, but observing that evening was coming on, He bade His Apostles cross over to the other shore. They therefore went with Jesus into the boat of Peter and put out from the shore, whilst others of the disciples followed after them. But when they least expected it, the winds arose and over them burst a violent tempest, which threatened to swamp their boat. Yet Jesus slept peacefully the while, though His Heart was ever watching.

This world is well represented by a vast sea, over which we all have to voyage on our way to our eternal home, but alas! not all in the one vessel of Peter, Holy Church. How many are stranded, how many are tempest-tossed and swallowed up by the angry waves. Even of those in the bark of Peter, not all reach the shores of a happy eternity, being overwhelmed in the storm of their unruly passions, or allured by the siren of unlawful pleasures, or dragged down into an abyss of pride and independence. Almighty God too permits often His Church or His members to be overtaken by

beat into the ship so that the ship was filled. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow: and they awake Him, and say to Him: Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish? And rising up, He rebuked the wind and said to the sea: Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said to them, Why are you fearful? Have you not faith yet?" (St. Mark iv. 36—40.)

perils and severe trials, either that His power may be made manifest in man's infirmity, or we ourselves compelled to have recourse to Him by prayer, or again, be convinced of our utter helplessness without His aid, and so forced to humble ourselves. Meanwhile Jesus seems to sleep: as indeed, when He leaves us in desolation, when faith within us appears to be dead and charity grows cold. Yet His Heart is ever watchful, ready to come in due season to our help. He at all events "is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."[1] When, therefore, desolation and trial assail us let us have recourse to Jesus Christ in earnest prayer, imploring and importuning Him, though He may appear neither to hear us nor to care for us, that He would save us lest we perish. Let us, even in fierce storms of temptation, repose with confidence under the protection of our good and loving Father, and say with the Psalmist, "In peace, in the self-same, I will sleep and I will rest."[2]

Second Point.—The terrified Apostles awoke Him: and He at once reprehended them for their want of faith, asking, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" The Apostles were as yet very weak in faith. They could not see that though Jesus as Man was asleep, in His Divine Nature, from which alone they could expect help and safety, He never slept, so that whether He was asleep or awake, they were equally secure under His Divine protection: just as in the Blessed Sacrament, although we do not see His Humanity, more than if it were either asleep or absent, as God He still is present and in the full possession and exercise of His infinite power. Such is the teaching of holy faith. It was for their defect in this faith that our Blessed Lord, with words at once gentle and paternal, reproved the Apostles. It was to strengthen them in this virtue, so necessary for the high vocation to which He had called them, that He ordained this very tempest: because it is from this firm faith,

[1] 1 Cor. x. 13. [2] Psalm iv. 9.

leading them to recognize in all circumstances of life the power, goodness, and providence of God, that springs the invincible confidence of the saints which obtains all they can desire. "Amen, I say to you, if ye have faith like unto a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain: Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible to you."[1] But as St. James says: "Let him ask in faith. For he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind."[2]

Our Lord asked them, "Why are ye fearful?" This fear arises from an apprehension that God will not furnish us with the desired help, and betrays distrust either in the promises of God, or in His power or goodness: and the enemy of our human nature makes use of it in order to fill us with disgust, despondency, and despair. Let us beware of these artifices of the devil, and say, with holy Job, "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him,"[3] for we know that Jesus is with us in our tribulation, He will deliver us out of it, and will turn it to our and His own glory.

Third Point.—"He commanded the winds and the waves, and there came a great calm." How often in the history of the Church do we see her threatened with utter destruction, either by the fire and sword of her persecutors, or through the disloyalty of her own children, who reject and rise up against her authority; so that men begin to doubt whether she can survive! How often again are we sorely tried by the machinations of our enemies, the infidelity of friends, the rebelliousness of our passions, or the temptations of the devil! Or again, how often are we plunged into such a state of desolation, that prayer is almost impossible, the light of faith is nearly extinguished, hope seems to abandon us, charity has grown cold, and we are inclined to abandon all effort! This trial is allowed by God that the power and majesty and love of Jesus Christ may be glorified in us.

[1] St. Matt. xvii. 19. [2] St. James i. 6.
[3] Job xiii. 15.

Take courage and confidence then, O my soul, for Jesus is on our side; He will in due season dispel the storm, and we shall in His own good time find peace restored to us. Let us remain faithful to our spiritual duties, and adhere to the resolutions which we have made in happier times; let us hope against hope, and our Jesus, who is faithful, loyal, and true, coming will come and will not tarry, and will say to us, Peace be with you.

We should here make our colloquy, and end with an "Our Father."

CHRIST WALKS UPON THE SEA.[1]

NOTE.—St. Ignatius does not follow chronological order in the several contemplations which he suggests to the exercitant, should time, or his special circumstances, or his disposition of mind urge him to prolong the Second Week of the Exercises.

In the present case, it may be that he desires to impress still more upon the exercitant the great necessity of unlimited confidence in God and diffidence in ourselves, if we are to do much for His glory and praise, as we saw in the preceding contemplation.

[1] "And forthwith Jesus obliged His disciples to go up into the boat and to go before Him over the water till He dismissed the people. And having dismissed the multitude, He went up into a mountain to pray. But the boat in the midst of the sea was tossed with the waves; for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night, He came to them walking upon the sea. And they seeing Him were troubled saying: It is an apparition. And they cried out for fear. And immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying: It is I, fear ye not. And Peter making answer, said: Lord if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. And He said, Come. And Peter going down out of the boat walked upon the water to come to Jesus. But seeing the wind was strong he was afraid; and when he began to sink he cried out, Lord, save me. And Jesus stretching forth His hand, took hold of him and said to him: O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt? And when they were come up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat adored Him, saying: Indeed, Thou art the Son of God." (St. Matt. xiv. 22—32.)

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The Evangelist tells us how Jesus, after dismissing the multitude, bade His Apostles recross the sea, whilst He retired to the hills for the night. A storm arose, and coming down again, He walked upon the sea, to the great terror of His Apostles until they recognized who it was. With the Master's permission, Peter steps upon the water to go towards Him; but getting frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out to Jesus, who rebuked him, and then taking him by the hand, both entered into the boat. Suddenly the wind lulled, and they found themselves at the shore with their boat.

Prelude 2.—Let us form in our mind a general picture of the scene.

Prelude 3.—With great earnestness let us ask for what we want, namely, to know intimately our Blessed Lord, so that we may love Him more ardently and humbly strive to confide in Him more perfectly, in all the circumstances of our lives.

First Point.—Jesus sends His Apostles away, and retires for the night to pray. Jesus had wrought the wonderful miracle of the multiplication of loaves, and dismissed the people to their homes, for they had a long way to go, and evening was coming on. We may picture to ourselves their feelings of awe, of admiration, and of gratitude at this manifestation of Divine power, goodness, and love on the part of our Lord. No sooner had the multitude started on their homeward journey, than the humble, modest Jesus ascends the neighbouring mountain to pray. How little He thinks of the praise or enthusiasm of the poor people whose hunger He had appeased, or of the glorious miracle which His charity has prompted Him to perform! He seeks only His Father's glory, and although His Human Nature is wearied with excessive labour, He seeks rest and repose by retiring into solitude to give Himself to prayer. O my soul, what a lesson this is for us, who when we do a little for God are inclined to take credit to ourselves, and instead of seeking repose in solitude and prayer,

go about in search of compliments and flattery from others, seeking our own glorification, but not the glory of our Heavenly Father.

Second Point.—Christ appears walking on the waters, and the Apostles imagined that He was an apparition. Let us picture the Apostles as they laboured with their oars against the strong head wind, which tossed their boat upon the troubled sea. Though for nine hours they had been rowing with all their might, they had hardly made half the passage; they were worn out with fatigue, full of sadness and terror, and struggling for their lives. What a change since the afternoon, when they were in company with our Lord, full of encouragement and activity, busily engaged in distributing the miraculous food to the multitude; but now He is absent from them, their happiness is exchanged for depression, and their whole anxiety is how to save themselves from shipwreck. Although they have had so lately a proof of His divine power, they are now so weak in faith, that they do not think of turning to Him and invoking His help. Whilst we are with Jesus, and all goes on well and prosperously, we too are content; no labour or pains are too great for us to undertake: we are full of fervour; the service of God is so sweet and easy. But let Jesus appear to withdraw Himself from us, let the darkness of spiritual desolation come over us, let the storms of temptation arise, or obedience put our courage and virtue to the test, how soon do we flag in our efforts, how sad and depressed we become, how hard and rough the way of perfection appears to be, how difficult it is to turn to God or pray to Him for help! "He rides with ease who is carried by the grace of God."[1] But consolation soon gives place to desolation, and it is then that our virtue is put to the proof, and our faith and confidence are tested. We must at once have recourse to prayer in the solitude of our hearts, for God will hear and pity us, He will turn our mourning into joy, and will compass us with gladness.[2]

[1] *Imitation*, bk. ii. c. ix. [2] *Ibid.*

Whilst the Apostles were in this state of distress they little thought that our Lord was not only conscious of their sad condition, but had actually ordained it, yet so as not to allow them to perish, "For He is faithful and will not suffer that they should be tried beyond their strength;" and again, "The souls of the just are in the hands of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them." Let us contemplate Him as He arises from His prayer, peacefully descends from the mountain, and hastens across the water to the relief of His poor Apostles. No sooner did they see Him than they began to cry out with fear, thinking that they beheld some phantom. But Jesus said to them: "Be of good heart; it is I, fear ye not." It is often thus with those who wish to make progress in God's service. Jesus visits them with some trial, temptation, humiliation, desolation, calculated to fill them with terror or dismay, but He quickly converts this into their greater peace, consolation, and joy; whilst, on the contrary, the devil will sometimes inspire confidence, false pleasure, false joy, thereby to lure his dupes into true misery and sin.

Let us then learn to mistrust, and carefully examine the beginning, the progress, and end of consolation, as St. Ignatius counsels us before giving ourselves up to it; and if in desolation, let us be of good heart, and firm in our faith.

Third Point.—"It is I, fear ye not." St. Peter walking on the water begins to sink. Jesus saves him and reproves him for his little faith. Let us seriously consider the words of our Blessed Lord. After allaying their terror, and bidding them to be of good heart, He says: "It is I." Oh! if in all our troubles we regarded them as coming from the hand of God, or at all events, as permitted in His sweet providence, for our greater sanctification, as holy faith teaches, then our hearts would never fail us; but alas! we are wanting like the Apostles in this spirit of practical faith. If when insulted or provoked to anger, if when ordered to perform something which is unpleasant or appears less prudent, if

overtaken by sickness or misfortune, if attacked by temptation or desolation, we in the spirit of faith heard our Lord addressing us and saying, "It is I," how different would be our conduct! how patient, humble, obedient, resigned, and cheerful!

"It is I, fear ye not." It is I, your Lord and Master; then why should we fear, seeing that all things are placed under His power, and that He is so interested in us and in our welfare, that He will not let a hair of our head perish,[1] and disposes all things with such care and wisdom, "that if we love Him, all things work together unto our good."[2]

Let us admire the ardour of love in St. Peter, together with his childlike simplicity. He at once recognized the voice and manner of his Master, and yielding to his impulsive nature, in defiance of the angry winds and the wild waves, asked leave to go to Jesus. Our Lord bids him at once to come, as a reward of his love, confidence, and simplicity, pledging Himself to sustain him as long as his faith and courage remained firm. But seeing the huge waves and the fierce winds, Peter became frightened, his courage failed him, so that yielding to fear, he began to sink, and cried to his Master to save him from drowning. What a lesson for us on the weakness and inconstancy of man, and of the necessity of holy confidence. Let us in addition learn the duty of earnest prayer when we are tempted, for he that neglects to do this will most surely fall. All temptations arise from the promptings of self-confidence or of distrust in God, and are only to be overcome by humility, prayer, and trustfulness in our loving Saviour.

Let us contemplate Jesus tenderly reproving Peter for giving way to the temptation of doubt and fear; and on the other hand the humility of Peter, who received the reproof of his Master with silent submission and grateful affection. O my soul, let us learn in what spirit we should receive the admonitions of those who are appointed over us. That we should often err is

[1] St. Luke xxi. 18. [2] Romans viii. 28.

human, but to be told of our faults, and to accept it in a spirit of humility and silence, is Christian. No sooner did Jesus enter the boat, than the sea became calm, and the boat rapidly approached the shore. It is thus that our trials, temptations, and desolations will vanish when it pleases our good God to remove them, and this He will do when we have done all that is required on our part, and have won our Lord back to us by fervent and earnest prayer.

In our colloquy let us beg for patience under our sufferings and trials, and also courage to suffer with our King and Captain. End with the "Our Father."

If time or opportunity permits, let there be two contemplations by way of repetition of the two former contemplations, and an application of the senses to the same.

OUR LORD SENDS HIS APOSTLES TO PREACH.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord sends His disciples to preach, communicating to them power to cast out devils and to heal the sick. In doing so He commends to them the exercise of prudence, simplicity, patience, disinterestedness, and poverty, and lays down the method and matter of their discourses.

[1] "These twelve Jesus sent, commanding them saying: Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles, and into the cities of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And going preach that the Kingdom of God is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely have you received, freely give. Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide until you go thence. . . . Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues." (St. Matt. x. 5—17.)

Prelude 2.—Let us put ourselves amongst the Apostles whilst Jesus is addressing them.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that we may know our dear Lord more intimately, and thus be induced to love Him more ardently, thereby, by our word and example, to draw others to Him according to our state of life.

First Point.—Jesus calls His Apostles and imparts to them the powers of exorcising and healing. Besides these two powers, the one spiritual, the other corporal, St. Matthew adds that Jesus commissioned them to preach, as also to raise the dead, and to cleanse the lepers. He had taught them all these things by His example, as was written of Him later, "And Jesus went about all the cities and towns, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity."[1] His compassionate and tender Heart is moved to pity at seeing the harvest ready for the sickle, and Himself the sole workman. He beheld His countrymen lying scattered about like sheep abandoned by their shepherd. The priests and Pharisees were the slaves of luxury and avarice, full of pride and self-justification; for the lost sheep of Israel they had no care, but only contempt. To these poor creatures Jesus sends His Apostles, moved by the sight of their bodily infirmities, but infinitely more by the grievous state of their souls. The words of Jeremias were too truly fulfilled: The people were wandering about the streets of the city, clamouring for bread, and there was no one to break it to them.[2] But to them He now gives grace to respond to His call, and inspires His Apostles with zeal and charity to do their duty well. They are not to preach themselves, nor to seek themselves in any way, but to give freely what they had gratuitously received, and to draw men to desire to enter into the Kingdom of God, which was about to be established.

Second Point.—"Behold I send you," says Jesus, "as sheep in the midst of wolves, be ye therefore wise as serpents, and simple as doves." He who is God, the

[1] St. Matt. ix. 35. [2] Cf. Lament. iv. 4; *Ibid.* i. 11.

Son of the Most High, the Creator of souls, their Sovereign Lord and Master; He to whom as Man all power is given in Heaven and on earth; He who is about to purchase with His life-blood the redemption of all men; behold He it is who formally gives them this commission. At the same time His omnipotence will protect them, will aid them, will enable them to do all that He enjoins, if only they respond to His bidding. Sheep are the symbols of innocence, gentleness, meekness, and of silence and patience under suffering and death: so also must His Apostles be. To innocence of life, they must add meekness and patience, seeing that their lot was to be cast amongst men who would treat them worse than the ravenous wolf does a gentle lamb: "For they will deliver you up in councils, they will scourge you in their synagogues: you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake. But when they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. . . . And you shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake. . . . Fear ye not those that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul into Hell."[1]

Under all this cruel and unjust treatment they are to be silent as the sheep that openeth not its mouth when about to be slaughtered. To this lesson of patience, He adds another, of prudence. They are to mix with men steeped in worldly prudence, and inspired by the devil, who is the spirit of falsehood, craft, and cunning. With no less prudence they must take advantage of the right occasions for preaching, observing what will be best adapted to the persons, to the times and circumstances, and whilst they denounce sin or offences against God, they must treat the sinner with tenderness, charity, and compassion. They are to be "simple as doves." The simplicity recommended by our Lord, is the moral supernatural virtue by which a man refers all he does purely

[1] St. Matt. x. 17—28.

to God's honour and glory, or by which he performs all things with a pure intention; according to the teaching of St. Luke: "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be simple, thy whole body will be lightsome; but if it be evil, thy whole body will be darksome."[1] Therefore our Lord would have His Apostles to seek in all things simply His Father's glory, and this by their sincerity in speech, by their avoidance of all craftiness or duplicity, or self-seeking, and by their thoroughness and honesty of purpose, as opposed to the unsound principles of the children of this world.

Let us examine how far we have carried out this counsel of our Lord. Does it not often happen that we flatter ourselves we can advance the interests of God by a false ostentation, by using language to conceal or misrepresent our views, by confounding the true and the false, by doing good for worldly gain under pretext of religion? If we are truly simple, we will rather suffer than do any harm, we will bear no resentment for injuries done us, we will count contumely to be gain in the cause of truth. Let us pray earnestly for this holy simplicity, which is so dear to the Heart of our Blessed Lord, that "His communication is with the simple,"[2] a spirit so directly opposed to the insincerity of the children of this world, and yet so highly appreciated by them that it wins their respect and confidence.

Third Point.—The further counsels of Jesus. In the first place He bids them not to wish for gold or silver but to cultivate poverty in spirit, and as far as may be, also in effect; for this voluntary renunciation paves the way to true humility. He would have them renounce all that is not absolutely necessary, thereby practically casting themselves on the providence of God, cutting off all earthly attachments or anxieties, and furnishing an example to mankind of sobriety and contempt for wealth, as well as simplicity and holiness. How often alas! do we find even those called to the apostolic life, or consecrated to God in Religion, still wedded to their own

[1] St. Luke xi. 33. [2] Prov. iii. 32.

comforts or conveniences, being less manly and less mortified than those who have been born in plenty and nurtured amid luxuries? May we not too often and with too much truth account for the comparatively little fruit produced in souls now-a-days by this want of the true spirit of poverty and love of hardship?

In the next place, they are to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, that God is about to pour out His graces through the teaching, example, Passion and Death of our Lord, upon mankind, whereby the Kingdom of God will be established in their souls in this life, to be followed in the next by the eternal possession of Him.

End with colloquy and "Our Father."

OUR LORD FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us call to mind how the Apostles asked our Lord to dismiss the people to their homes, as evening was coming on, and as they had been fasting all day in the desert; how He ordered the few loaves to be brought to Him, blessed them, and handed them to the Apostles, who distributed them to the people; how when all had been supplied, twelve baskets full remained over.

[1] "And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him saying: It is evening; this is a desert place, and the hour is now past; send away the multitudes, that going into the town, they may buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said to them: They have no need to go, give you them to eat. They answered Him: We have not here but five loaves and two fishes. And when He had commanded the multitudes to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat and were filled. And they took what remained, twelve full baskets of fragments. And the number of them that did eat was five thousand men, besides women and children." (St. Matt. xiv. 15—20.)

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present and observing the scene.

Prelude 3.—Pray earnestly that we may know our Lord more and more perfectly as He presents Himself to us in this mystery, that we may love Him more fervently and follow Him more faithfully.

First Point.—Let us consider how our Lord had aroused great enthusiasm throughout the neighbourhood west of the Sea of Galilee by His miracles, preaching, and Divine sanctity, so that the inhabitants of the towns and villages also came out to hear and see Him. He however crossed over the sea, in order to escape from their applause and admiration, and to refresh His Soul in solitude and communion with His Heavenly Father. From this we learn what should be the conduct of those who desire to work for God: they must fly from the praise of men; they must love solitude and devote themselves to prayer. It is only in this way that they can hope for the help of God, without which all their labour will be in vain. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."[1]

Early the following morning the people arrived on foot at the place where our Lord was alone and engaged in prayer. Let us see the tender Heart of Jesus, as He looks upon these thousands of poor simple people, wearied with their long journey, and all anxious to hear Him; the priests and scribes are too much taken up with themselves or with the great and wealthy to attend to these poor sheep, who are thus left without a shepherd. It was to preach to such as these that He was sent, to heal the contrite of heart, to collect together the lost sheep of Israel.

Throughout the day He prolonged His discourse to them, and only rested to heal any that were sick, until at length the Apostles intervened. The crowd was hungry, they had a long way to go, and evening was coming on apace; they should be at once dismissed. Jesus knew what He was about to do, and when Andrew

[1] Psalm cxxvi. 1.

had found a boy who had five barley loaves and two fishes, Jesus ordered them to be brought to Him. Let us admire the poverty of our Lord and His Apostles, who for all emergencies were possessed only of about six pounds; He who was the Lord and master of the world, had this sum of money for Himself and His followers, and those that came after Him to hear Him, were all equally destitute. Let us compare our love of poverty with His, and our practice of poverty with that of our King.

Second Point.—Jesus blessed the loaves and gave them to the multitude. Let us contemplate the Apostles, who according to the instructions of our Lord, arranged the multitude in groups of one hundred or of fifty, and then bade them be seated upon the grass; with how simple a faith do they promptly act as they are told. The people had come to hear Jesus, they were seeking the Kingdom of God, the Lord will look to the rest. "Do not seek what you shall eat or what you shall drink, or wherewith you shall be clothed: for your Father knoweth that you have need of these things: but seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."[1]

As this same Son of God causes the few grains of corn sown by the husbandman to produce a thousand-fold in the harvest-time, so in the hands of the Apostles does He multiply the loaves to feed His poor people in the desert. Oh! let us blush for shame to think of our little faith and confidence in our Blessed Lord, whose love and power are at least as great in our regard as they were in regard of these poor Jews. But this stupendous miracle is only a figure of an infinitely higher and more sublime multiplication, a symbol and prelude of that mystery of mysteries in which Christ our Lord, the true Bread that came down from Heaven, multiplies Himself throughout the world, and for all time. "From the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, there shall be offered up a clean oblation, and My Name shall

[1] St. Luke xii. 29.

be great among the Gentile nations:" and this His Flesh and Blood is distributed to us through the hands of those who are the successors of the Apostles. Oh! how astounding a mystery of love, how great a mystery of faith!

Third Point.—The people ate and were filled, and still twelve baskets full remained over and above. Let us try to picture to ourselves the wonder mingled with awe, and the intense joy of the men, women, and children, as they each one received the food handed to them. With what feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving they must have partaken of it, especially as we may suppose that it was not merely multiplied in quantity, but was also miraculously transformed in its taste, and in the nourishment which it gave. So is it with that other Bread of which this was only the symbol. *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali, sorte tamen inæquali: mors est malis vita bonis, vide paris sumptionis quam sit dispar exitus.* The end which Jesus had in view was attained. He sought not His own glory, nor the empty applause and esteem of men; His desire was that they should believe in Him, and in His Divinity. And this they did, for the multitude cried aloud: "This is of a truth the Prophet that is to come into the world." Nay, their excitement and enthusiasm were wrought up to such a pitch that they would have carried Him off by force and proclaimed Him their King, had He not in His profound humility "fled again into the mountain Himself alone."[1] Yet, when they wished to humble and insult Him, He came forward boldly to confront His countrymen. Here again I see the consistency of my King and Captain. Oh! how different is my conduct, how opposed to His! and yet I have often pledged myself to answer to His call, and embrace His standard.

Address a very fervent colloquy to Jesus, and repeat the *Anima Christi.* End with the "Our Father."

[1] St. John vi. 14, 15.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The history of this mystery is that Christ our Lord led His three specially favoured Apostles to the top of the mountain, probably Mount Thabor, where He was transfigured before them. Whilst thus revealing His glory, He conversed with Moses and Elias on His future Passion; and at the same time the voice of His Father proclaimed from heaven, "This is My beloved Son."

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit ascend this mountain and humbly observe all that is recounted regarding the mystery enacted upon it.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg a more lively appreciation of our dear Lord as He is both God and Man, that we may come to love Him more perfectly, and may be encouraged to follow Him more faithfully in the spirit of humility and self-sacrifice.

First Point.—Jesus is transfigured and the fashion of His countenance is altered. About eight days after St. Peter's confession of our Lord's Divinity, says St. Luke, He took Peter and James and John, and went up into a mountain to pray. How mysterious is the distribution

[1] "And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias speaking with Him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshaded them. And lo! a voice out of the cloud saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them; and said to them, Arise and fear not. And they lifting up their eyes, saw no one but only Jesus. And Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead." (St. Matt. xvii. 1—9.)

of God's graces and favours! to one He gives five talents, to another two, to another one: in like manner is it with the providence of God in the assignment or permission of trials and sufferings. These three Apostles were to be the witnesses of the terrible Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, and of the apparent abandonment of Jesus by His Father; therefore are they favoured with the signal grace of witnessing His Transfiguration. In like manner God proportions His graces to our trials, that so we may be enabled to bear them: and according to the measure of His favours we must expect the number of our trials and sufferings to be. He leads them aside to the mountain to pray: thereby warning us that if we wish to pray, we must retire as far as possible from the haunts and intercourse of men, to some solitary place, where we may be alone with God, leaving the distractions of life behind us. It is in solitude that God loves to speak to our hearts, and shed His light into our souls, that we may thereby see Him more clearly. It is in silent prayer that our souls are raised above all created things and are led to look down on them and despise them; it is from prayer that we derive strength to bear our trials, and become more closely united with God. And when we go to pray, let us take with us the simplicity and earnestness of Peter, the rigid sense of duty of James, and the tender, ardent love of John.

We next contemplate how, whilst they are absorbed in prayer, the face of our Lord gradually begins to shine, like the sun when it is breaking through the clouds, until at last it opens out all its brightness, and His garments become as snow sparkling in the brilliant sunshine. At first the Apostles, being wearied and overpowered with sleep, did not perceive the strange transformation until they were awakened by its dazzling light. So does it often happen with us. At times when the spirit of faith seems to be dead in us, or when we have grown drowsy or lethargic in meditation, we do not recognize the wonderful transformation of our Lord in the Holy Mass or in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. But why does

our Lord thus transfigure Himself? It may be, that He desired to show His Apostles how He conceals His Divine Nature under the outward form of His Humanity; or that when the time came for their witnessing His Agony in the Garden, or looking upon Him as He hung dying on a Cross amidst the insults of the crowd, their faith in Him might not be shaken; or perhaps it was to inspire both them and ourselves with hope and courage in bearing the sufferings, persecutions, and trials of this life for His sake, by a foresight of the glory with which we shall be rewarded; according to what is written, "Yet so if we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."[1] Let us next picture to ourselves the amazement and awe of the Apostles at the sight vouchsafed to them. With what ecstasies of joy and love were they not inflamed to see their humble Master thus honoured and glorified. But, O my soul, how far more truly should we rejoice, how far greater should be our love of that same Master so transfigured for us, as to become not only an object of our veneration and admiration, but to be our very food! But alas! we regard Him in the Holy Sacrament with such coldness and such strange indifference, notwithstanding the assurance of St. Bernard: *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi carior.*

Second Point.—Moses and Elias appeared to them and spoke with Jesus. Let us here listen in spirit to the subject of their conversation. The soul of the Jewish lawgiver had been summoned by Jesus from Limbo, and had been reunited to his body, which now reflected the bright glory of our Lord; in like manner did Elias return from the place where, until the appointed time, he enjoys an immunity from the approach of death. The one as representative of the Law, the other representing the Prophets, combine in bearing witness to our Lord's Messiahship. Let us contemplate them as they prostrate themselves in profound reverence and adoration before the Son of God, regarding with admiration and intense

[1] Romans viii. 17.

love their most loving Saviour. The Apostles also are rapt in ecstasy, while they behold the majesty and glory of these types and witnesses of their Divine Master, holding earnest conversation with Him. Let us listen to their words, for we are told "They spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem,"[1] hence we may gather how dear to our Lord, even in the midst of His temporary glorification, was that Passion and Death which through His love for us He was about to undergo. Let us learn too from this example that even in the hours of consolation we must prepare ourselves for trials and sufferings, and must at those times summon up courage to bear the Cross along with our dear Lord. The present life, which is short, is the season for suffering and strife; whereas our long eternity is reserved for endless rejoicing and the celebration of victory.

Third Point.—"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Let us contemplate St. Peter, who, with his usual simple, ingenuous, affectionate, and impulsive disposition, suggests to our Lord that, if it be His good pleasure, he and James and John will build dwellings for the Master, for Moses, and for Elias! He imagined they would stand in need of tabernacles, as though our Lord was about to leave the rest of His Apostles and interrupt the work which He had come to do, or would forego the trials and tribulations of this life to indulge in relaxation and rest. Truly the Evangelist observes of him, "He knew not what he was saying." He had yet to learn that glory is only to be earned by the Cross: "It behoveth Christ to suffer, and so to enter into glory." At present he was not dead to self, he knew not in what his real interest consisted, but this he knew full well later on, when he wrote: "But if you partake of the suffering of Christ, rejoice that when His glory shall be revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy."[2] If then the first sight of the glorified Body of Jesus made him forget all

[1] St. Luke ix. 31. [2] 1 St. Peter iv. 13.

earthly things, what will it be to see God Himself face to face, and to enjoy the eternal possession of His Divinity: if but one drop of Heaven's happiness so transformed him, what will it be when we plunge into the ocean of heavenly bliss and glory? Our Blessed Lord makes no reply, but at that moment "a bright cloud overshadowed them; and they were afraid when they entered into the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, hear Him."[1] They were appalled at this fresh manifestation of Divine power and majesty, and though awe-struck, were filled with heavenly joy and consolation on witnessing this fresh glory of their Master. St. John, indeed, had already seen something similar, when present at the Baptism of our Lord. For there, too, the voice of the Eternal Father spoke from Heaven, and in the same terms gave testimony of the Divinity of His Son, whilst the Holy Spirit appeared under the figure of a dove, and not, as now, in a bright cloud. Jesus is the beloved inasmuch as He is the most perfect image of the Father, and in Him and by Him alone does the Father love us. Him must we hear, His teaching we are bound to accept without doubting and reduce it to practice, His example it is requisite that we should imitate, for it is written: "Whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren."[2] Let us note how our Lord came and touched His Apostles, who had fallen down in terror at the voice of God, and bade them rise and not be afraid; thereby inspiring them with confidence and calm of mind.

And rising up, they saw nobody but Jesus, whose glory was again hidden, and who appeared as they were wont to see Him. And so the vision of the Transfiguration had passed away. Let us learn from this, not to look for or expect in this life either many or long continued spiritual consolations. If it pleases God to grant them, let us, as St. Ignatius directs, and as we learn

[1] St. Luke ix. 34. [2] Romans vii. 29.

from this contemplation, reflect during them on the times of desolation and suffering which are sure to come, and thus arm ourselves with courage to meet them.

While we follow them on their way down from the mountain, let us pay heed to the counsel given by our Lord, that they were not to mention what they had seen or heard until after His Resurrection, and let us learn therefrom the lesson of humility and of prudence, by cutting off occasions of envy or jealousy on the part of others, and by concealing from others the gifts or graces which we have received from God, unless God's glory, the salvation of souls, or obedience may require otherwise.

In our colloquy let us beg of Jesus to give us strength to follow Him now in self-abjection and suffering in order that at death we may merit to be transfigured with Him in glory. End with the "Our Father."

Should time and opportunity allow, it will be well to make as usual a repetition of the last two meditations, and to add an application of the senses.

ON THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Christ heard of the sickness of His friend Lazarus from the lips of the messengers sent to Him. After a lapse of two days, He told His Apostles that Lazarus was dead, and went with them to the home of Martha and Mary that He might raise him to life again.

[1] "Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary, and of Martha her sister. . . . His sisters therefore sent to Him saying: Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick. . . . When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days. . . . And after that He said to them: Lazarus our friend sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. . . . Then Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe: but let us go to him.

On arriving He proceeded to the grave, where He was moved to tears, and summoned the dead man to life again.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the way that led to Bethania from the Jordan, the house also of Lazarus, and the sepulchre in which he was laid.

Prelude 3.—Beg earnestly that we may know more intimately the goodness, mercy, and tender love of the Heart of our Blessed Lord, may thereby be inflamed with more ardent love for Him, and may imitate His example in the exercise of these virtues.

First Point.—Martha and Mary sent word to Jesus, and two days later He starts to visit them. In the first place, let us admire the gratitude of our Lord, and His generosity for the smallest favours done to Him. Mary had anointed Him and had wiped His feet with her hair, says St. John, and Martha had ministered to His few wants. These acts His generous Heart now yearns to repay, even at the risk of falling into the hands of His cruel persecutors, and the full consciousness that the fame thereof would hasten the hour of His death. Again, we see by the terms of their message how well the

. . . Jesus therefore came and found that he had been already four days in the grave. And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha therefore as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him; but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. . . . I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead shall live. Believeth thou this? She said to Him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. . . . When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing Him she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus groaned in spirit and troubled Himself. . . . And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said: Behold how He loved him. Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over it . . . They took therefore the stone away, and Jesus lifting up His eyes said: Father, I give thee thanks, &c. . . . that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound feet and hands with winding bands. . . . Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go." (St. John xi. 1—44.)

sisters knew the tender and merciful disposition of the Sacred Heart. They do not entreat Him to come to them; it will be enough merely to notify the cause of their sorrow, and leave the rest to Him. He was of course already aware of the state of His friend, but He would teach us not to act on the impulse of our natural feelings, and would also put to the test the faith and confidence which His friends reposed in Him, and therefore He refrained for two whole days from going to their assistance. This would also give Him an opportunity of proving to the Jews His Divinity by restoring Lazarus to life in their very presence, and of intensifying the joy of the sorrowing sisters. In vain did His Apostles urge Him not to go; they reminded Him that Lazarus was dead, and that the Jews were on the look-out to arrest Him, in order to stone Him to death. He persists however in His resolution, and declares that He is glad to go for their sakes. So we are likewise often inclined to wonder and perhaps repine at the apparent indifference of God or of His representatives to save us from trials and sorrows, or to show us more sympathy in them, little thinking, in our lack of faith, that they are perhaps designed for God's greater glory and for our own future joy and glory.

Second Point.—Jesus requires a profession of faith before exercising His power. The mourners were assembled in the house of Lazarus, when our Lord drew near to Bethania. As soon as Martha heard of it, she at once went forth to meet Him, and forgot, in her delight at seeing Jesus, to notify it to her sister. When she met Him she only said: "If Thou hadst been with us my brother would not have died;" by this she acknowledged His power and His love, but thought not of His Divinity, nor of His omniscience, nor His omnipotence, although she declared her confidence that if He should vouchsafe to ask God for her brother's life, He would be heard. Let us admire this simplicity, confidence, and love on the part of Martha! She knew, as she owned, that Lazarus would rise again on the last day.

Upon this Jesus instructs her in regard to His Divinity; He is not a prophet who needs to pray to God, but is God Himself, "the Resurrection and the Life, the author of both; whoever believeth in Him shall after this mortal life enjoy life eternal; and whoever in this life believeth in Him shall live for ever." After she had professed her belief in all these points, and through His grace had fully acknowledged that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, who had come into this world, she hastened to her sister and privately informed her of the presence of Jesus, who was waiting for her. Let us picture to ourselves the intense joy of the penitent and loving soul of Mary; how promptly and calmly she withdraws from the company of the mourners in order to go to Him whom her soul loveth. Let us accompany the mourners, who followed her, thinking that she was going to the grave to shed tears over the remains of her brother. In what profound reverence she casts herself at the feet of her Lord, her heart broken with grief and inflamed with charity as she pityingly exclaimed, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." She could say no more. When Jesus saw her fast falling tears, His Heart became sad and distressed, and He *groaned* in spirit; for He saw what anguish sin had brought upon mankind, even upon those that were most dear to Him: He saw too those unhappy Scribes and Pharisees, for whose sake He had allowed Lazarus to die, that by raising him to life again He might force them to acknowledge His Divinity; and moreover He knew how they would turn this grace against themselves by making it a cause for hurrying on His death.

Well might the Soul of Jesus be troubled as in spirit He reviewed the horrible crimes which the Chief Priests, Scribes, Pharisees, and His misguided countrymen would shortly perpetrate: yet all this did not prevent His heroically signing His death-warrant by restoring the dead Lazarus to life. He asked therefore to be taken to the graveside. As they approached it, His tears began to fall, and the crowd observing this said, "Behold

how He loved him." Oh! my poor soul, with how much more reason may we say, Behold how He loves us. Not with warm tears, but with tears of blood, with the last drops of His Blood mingled with water, He has shown that love; and beyond the grave it has continued, and still is as strong as ever; nay, with more than mother's love He gives us Himself for our food, and the whole of His most precious Blood to drink, not once, but as often as we wish! What can we, what shall we do in return? Alas! how mean and contemptible is the sacrifice which we have resolved to make in order to prove our gratitude and love in return: and yet Jesus is willing to accept of it.

Third Point.—Jesus weeps, and prays, and commands Lazarus to come forth. In order to take away all chance of calling in question the fact of the miracle, Jesus bids them to remove the stone from the grave; He allows Martha to object out of delicacy lest by the sight or smell of the decomposing body the senses of her Lord might be offended. Then, His tears falling fast, He prays to His Father, and publicly declares His reason for working this miracle, that they who witness it may believe that He is the true Messiah, while "in a loud voice," in the capacity of Lord and Master of life and death, He utters the command, "Lazarus come forth." At once he who was dead came forth, and they unbound the cloths from his legs and arms.

Let us contemplate the scene: the awe and dismay of the crowd, the gratitude, love, and rapture of the sisters, the reverence, adoration, and thanksgiving of Lazarus; but, above all, the feelings which swelled the Heart of our dear Lord! Some indeed of the standers-by believed; but oh! strange perversity of the human heart when the slave of unbridled passions! others made their way to Jerusalem to tell what they had seen to the council of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, who from that day devised means how to put Him to death.

Make a fervent colloquy to our dear Lord; and conclude with the "Our Father."

ON THE SUPPER IN BETHANIA.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—When Christ was at supper along with His Apostles in the house of Simon, whom He had healed of leprosy, Mary Magdalene poured precious ointment upon His Head. Judas exclaimed bitterly against such waste, but Jesus applauded her for what she had done.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we are present in the supper-room and observing the guests.

Prelude 3.—Beg again greater knowledge and love of our Blessed Lord, that we may try to imitate Him still more perfectly, especially in the practice of holy patience, forbearance, and true charity.

First Point.—Our Lord sits at supper with Lazarus in the house of Simon. Perhaps this is the same person who two years before had entertained our Lord, when a Pharisee, and whom with all charity He had reproved on account of his interior condemnation of the same Magdalene. He was now one of the principal inhabitants of Bethania, and was much attached to our Lord. In order to celebrate the great event of the resurrection of

[1] "But when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to Him a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured it on His Head as He was at table. And the disciples seeing it had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For she in pouring this ointment upon My body hath done it for My burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her." (St. Matt. xxvi. 6—13.)

"Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of right spikenard, of great price, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment . . . Judas Iscariot said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor: but because he was a thief." (St. John xii. 1—5.)

Lazarus, and show his gratitude for his own restoration to health, he invited Jesus and His Apostles, together with Lazarus, Mary and Martha, and other friends, to a banquet. Martha, her sister, and other women served at the feast as usual. Let us contemplate the reverence and joy with which the now fervent convert entertains his Lord; the delight of the disciples at the homage paid to Him; the reverence, humility, and love of Martha. We see also Lazarus filled with such deep and serious thought at having been so recently recalled from the house of his eternity; but Jesus most of all, whose graciousness and modest dignity breathes forth the air of Heaven. How perfect a model is here presented to us for our imitation! And yet, notwithstanding all the graces we have received, how far off we still are from being like to Him.

Second Point.—On this occasion Simon could not have fallen into his previous error, and hence there was no need that Magdalene should wash His feet with water or with her tears. We may contemplate her, now a welcome and invited guest, bearing forward the alabaster box that contained a pound of ointment of spikenard of great price. From that she anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping His feet with her hair, and poured ointment on His Head, so that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. She thus wished to testify her belief in His Divinity, as well as in His Human Nature. Let us study her modesty, reverence, and devotion, in paying to Him this tribute of her love. She has given up all things in the world; and every earthly affection has been long since banished from her heart; her one desire is to love her Lord and God, to suffer and die along with Him and for His sake. How necessary the lesson for us, who have been forgiven not once, but times without number, who have been permitted so often to receive Him in Holy Communion, and have been specially favoured with graces innumerable. What sacrifices have we made to prove the reality of our conversion, what proofs have we given, or are we giving, of our forgetfulness of self, of

our detachment from all things earthly? In the election which we have made, what sign have we given of the firmness of purpose with which we are resolved to adhere to it? Surely we shall blush with shame as we compare our half-heartedness with the unswerving perseverance of the penitent Magdalene. Let us consider more particularly the Heart of our dear Lord, who would not suffer Himself to be outdone in generosity, but rewarded her sacrifice with the richest and most abundant graces. And let us remember that, poor sinners as we are, we too shall meet with equal generosity if, like Magdalene, we approach Jesus in the same loving and generous spirit.

Third Point.—Though Judas murmurs, Jesus approves. Judas, who was a traitor and a thief, says St. John, complained of the reckless prodigality of Magdalene, declaring that she might have sold the ointment and given the proceeds to the poor; and he at first led some of the others with him. It was not any special love for the poor that prompted him, but because he held the common purse, and carried what was put therein. What a grief and surprise it must have been to the heart of the penitent Magdalene to hear so heartless a remark coming from the lips of one of our Lord's own disciples, nay, of an Apostle. Observe, also, how easily, and often fatally, false and hypocritical reasoning may pervert the right feeling and simplicity of others. His fellow-Apostles little knew that Judas was already the slave of avarice, and prepared to sell his Lord for gold. This should teach us to weigh carefully the words of those who, under the semblance of virtue, venture to denounce that which in itself is good, lest we should be carried away by the words of false doctrine. For it is the neglect of this precaution which leads so many to yield themselves up to the false principles laid down by men of the world, or by those who pose as men of science and unbiassed judgment, though in their lives they do violence to both.

Then Jesus said: "Why do you trouble this woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon Me." He thus

showed them that He knew their thoughts, and justified His servant's action. She had anointed Him a little before the time, in anticipation of His Death that day week; she had given them, Apostles though they were, a lesson of detachment from the things of this life, of sacrifice in the spirit of His Cross, and of love towards His Divine Person. Our Lord bore most patiently the insult to Himself conveyed in these murmurs of dissatisfaction, though it came from those so near and dear to Him, but He would not tolerate it when addressed to His faithful servant. Nay more, He declared to them, and in words verified to the letter, that wherever His Gospel should be preached in the whole world, what she had just done for Him in this anointing should be told in memory of her. Here again let us admire the generosity of our dear Lord, and acknowledge how loyal and true He is to those who are His friends—*Fidelis Deus.*

Let us make a fervent colloquy to our Blessed Lord, and end with the "Our Father."

This and the previous contemplation may be repeated with great profit, and be followed with the usual application of the senses.

TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Christ sends two Apostles to bring to Him an ass and her foal. The Apostles accompany Him as He proceeds towards the city seated upon the ass; and when He drew nigh crowds came out to meet Him, spreading clothes and palm branches along the road, and crying out, Hosanna to the Son of David.

[1] "Then Jesus sent two of His disciples, saying to them: Go into the village that is over against you, and you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go. . . . And the disciples did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them,

Prelude 2.—We may imagine the road by Bethphage, and the slopes of Olivet over the Cedron into the city.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg what we wish, namely, to know our Lord in this mystery, that we may thereby love Him the more and may be stimulated to imitate Him more closely.

First Point.—Our Lord directs that the ass and her colt should be brought to Him that on it He might enter into Jerusalem as in triumph, not through any desire of worldly honour, knowing how fickle and unreliable is the praise of men, but because He willed to fulfil the prophecy of Zachary: "Shout for joy, O Daughter of Jerusalem, Behold thy King cometh to thee, the Just and Saviour: He is poor and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass."[1] By this would He prove Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of David, and would leave them without excuse if they refused to believe in Him. He would also, by securing for Himself so strange a triumph, clearly intimate that He claimed no temporal sovereignty or earthly greatness, but simply spiritual rule over the souls of men. Earthly kings assume their royal state amid scenes of pomp and worldly display, but our true Lord and King enters His royal city in poor and lowly guise, He is meek and gentle, seated upon an animal of little value, surrounded

and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before and followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." (St. Matt. xxi. 1—9.)

"And it came to pass that when He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethania unto the mount called Olivet, He sent two of His disciples. . . . And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said to them: Why loose you the colt? But they said because the Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus. And casting their garments on the colt, they set Jesus thereon. And as they went they spread their clothes in the way . . and the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in Heaven and glory on high. And when He drew near, seeing the city He wept over it." (St. Luke xix. 29—41.)

[1] Zach. ix. 9.

with a group of uncouth fishermen for retinue, and followed by a crowd of artisans and children waving branches of the palm and olive to welcome Him and pay Him homage. All this they did of their own free-will, without thought of gain or any previous collusion.

Our Lord on this occasion in various ways gave evidence of His Divinity, for, besides fulfilling the inspired prophecy of Zachary, He told the Apostles exactly where and how they were to find the ass and her foal, what they were to say and what reply they would receive from those who owned them, and how immediately they would be allowed to lead the animals away. Thus did our Lord assert His absolute dominion over all creatures and at the same time manifest His distinct fore-knowledge and control of future events. Let us admire the simplicity and blind obedience of the Apostles, who unhesitatingly carried out the instructions given them by Jesus; and let us ask ourselves in what spirit we carry out the orders of those whom God has placed over us? Is it one of unquestioning simplicity, or do we examine and criticize those orders, making objections or difficulties, on the ground of health, incompetence, and the like? Then, after bending the Superior's will to our own, do we flatter ourselves that we are obedient, or murmur and complain if success does not attend upon us? This is not the kind of obedience that will speak victories.

Second Point.—Jesus rides upon the ass, on which the Apostles had laid their garments. Let us contemplate our King, the Lord of the whole universe and of all ages, thus sitting upon a beast of burden, covered with the worn-out garments of some of His Apostles. Yet what true harmony and becomingness in the picture! The simplicity, humility, and poverty of Jesus would ill accord with any vain display, even under the pretext of promoting God's glory, or upholding His own dignity: it would contradict everything that He had Himself always taught by word and example as to the beauty, necessity, and excellence of the virtue of humility.

Moreover, true worth and nobility are attached by all men of sound judgment to the practice of this virtue: genuine merit does not stand in need of external show, or those outward trappings which are employed by conscious undesert to hide a hollow pretension. How well have the greatest saints learnt and practically understood this lesson given us by our Lord. Hence those who have signalized themselves in saving souls have been men who sincerely loved abjection, self-abasement, and humiliation. Let us admire the sweetness and amiability whereby the gentle Saviour attracted the multitudes to His Person. While the great ones of this world flatter themselves that they enhance their authority and influence by putting on a cold and haughty manner, it is by an unassuming and humble demeanour that reverence, confidence, and love are really to be won. Let us then beg of Jesus to grant us this grace, that we may learn of Him to be truly meek and humble of heart. Let us also contemplate the affectionate devotedness of the Apostles, and with what joy they take off their outside garments and arrange them on the back of the ass to form a seat for their beloved Master. Though they were poor and much worn, our Lord was well pleased, seeing that they were the best which His disciples had to give, and what He esteems is the disposition of the giver, not the value of the thing given, as we know from the widow's mite, which she offered in the Temple as being all that she possessed.

Third Point.—The people spread their garments also along the way, and hail Him as the Son of David. Let us contemplate the persons who form the crowd; they are Jews, both old and young, who have heard of the wonderful works of Jesus, especially of His raising Lazarus from the dead; and they are filled with enthusiasm at the sight of His kind and amiable bearing. There are some Pharisees, too, amongst them, incredulous and inveterate foes, proud in their contempt for the lower classes of the people and of hatred for Jesus. Last come the Apostles, whose hearts are stirred with

mingled feelings of joy and fear, wondering how all this is to end.

Let us listen to the triumphant shouts of welcome and of blessing that fill the air: "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." How little they thought what a change would take place within the next few days, that their cry would be, "Away with Him, crucify Him;" and His triumph be succeeded by a cruel and ignominious death upon the Cross. From this we will surely learn at last how little value is to be set on the praise or esteem of men, on worldly honour or glory. It is short-lived as the flower, fickle as the changing wind. All this our Saviour knew, and His exterior calmness but ill-concealed the pangs which He felt in His Heart at the blindness and infidelity of the inhabitants of Jerusalem for whom He was about to lay down His life, and at the thought of the terrible destruction shortly to befall that doomed city, along with the captivity or massacre of those for whom He laboured and suffered in vain.

"Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Yes, for He is truly blessed by the Father who sent Him to give peace and blessing to mankind; blessed in Himself as the Eternal Son of God; blessed in His Human Nature, which was enriched with all perfections; blessed in His Incarnation, when He brought to us tidings of peace and of good things; blessed, indeed, seeing that through Him, and by Him alone, have all blessings been conferred upon man in time and in eternity.

Let us address our colloquy to our Blessed Lord, praying Him to grant us grace to follow Him now on His progress to Calvary; and to endow us with courage and fortitude amidst the trials that await us. Say the *Anima Christi;* and end with the "Our Father."

ON THE PREACHING IN THE TEMPLE.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—St. Luke tells us that Jesus proceeded straight to the Temple on entering the city, and began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought, saying to them: It is written, My house is a house of prayer.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we also are present in the court of the Temple.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that which we desire, namely, a more perfect knowledge and love of our Blessed Lord, our King and Leader, so that we may be ever faithful to His teaching and example.

First Point.—Jesus enters the Temple, and casts out the buyers and the sellers. Let us accompany our Lord as He passes with the crowd through the streets until He approaches the Temple. Whither else was He to go? He was acclaimed as King, and as "such was He appointed by His Father over Sion His holy mountain."[2] Rightly then He goes to His own palace; He is the one great High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech,[3] hence the Temple is the befitting place for Him; He is the Great God, and justly did He visit the Temple consecrated to His worship, that He might drive out from thence those who were sacrilegiously profaning it. We may behold how inflamed He is with holy zeal for the house of God, and full of Divine wrath.[4] With an expression on His countenance of more than human majesty and power, He gazes on the noisy, jostling crowd of traders who were profaning the sacred place; being

[1] "And entering into the Temple, He began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying to them: It is written, My house is a house of prayer. But you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the Temple. And the Chief Priests, and the scribes, and the rulers of the people sought to destroy Him. For all the people were very attentive to hear Him." (St. Luke xix. 45—48.)

[2] Psalm ii. 6. [3] Psalm cix. 4. [4] Psalm lxviii. 80.

filled with indignation at the perfidy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were the slaves of avarice, robbery, and hypocrisy, and who, caring nothing for the welfare of the poor, only imposed heavy burdens on them by their extortions. Let us contemplate our Lord boldly rebuking them for their crime in turning *His* house, which was destined for a house of prayer, into a den of thieves. He takes up the cause of the poor, and denounces the faithless guardians of the Temple, who, for the sake of gain and of having more to spend in self-indulgence, are willing to sacrifice the honour and reverence due to God. From this let us learn to be on our guard against the love of riches, which is the fruitful source of many miseries. Let us learn to love poverty, and, as far as is consistent with our state, to make this love practical, by the exercise of it in our daily lives. "The desire of money is the root of all evils; which some coveting have erred from the faith, and have entangled themselves in many sorrows."[1] This we see in the history of the Church, not only through the prevarication of some of its teachers, but also through the loss of fervour in those consecrated to God in Religion and through the consequent necessity of reformation or at times of actual expulsion. "For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil and into many unprofitable desires, which drown men in destruction and perdition."[2] Hence also arises a desire for comfort, conveniences, and imagined necessities in regard of food, clothing, accommodation, or recreation, such as are quite inconsistent not only with the spirit of religious life, but with the sacred ministry. They that set their hearts on commodities of this kind, fly from labour, spend their days in trifles, avoid everything that is disagreeable; and so cause others to lose all respect for or confidence in them, to the great ruin of souls. Whereas those who in their dress, food, and manner of life show their high esteem for poverty, excite admiration, confidence, and love in others, and thus exercise great influence with them.

[1] 1 Timothy vi. 10. [2] 1 Timothy vi. 9.

Second Point.—Jesus was teaching daily in the Temple. He thirsted for the promotion of His Father's glory, for the establishment of His Kingdom in the souls of men, and for their eternal salvation. The spirit of zeal and charity penetrated Him through and through: it gave Him no rest during the day, it led Him to spend the whole night in prayer. With the early morning He presented Himself in the courts of the Temple, where the people collected round Him and where He gave them instruction. His teaching was as simple as it was divine. He made no use of the flowers of rhetoric or of the devices of oratory, but inculcated moral duties and dogmatic truth with that simplicity, gravity, and clearness which was calculated to influence the soul rather than gratify the curiosity or flatter the senses of His audience, by indulging in oratorical vanity.

By this our Lord would teach a lesson to those who, under the pretext of preaching His Word, preach their own, seeking themselves and not the interests of Jesus Christ, to the detriment of their own and their neighbours' souls. How different was the spirit of the Apostle who declares of himself, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" [1] and again, "For Christ we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us." [2] In these passages he lays down what should be the subject-matter of our teaching, as well as the manner in which it is to be imparted, that is to say, after the manner of Christ. Let us beware, as St. John Chrysostom counsels, lest we turn our preaching into an occasion of sacrilege, "adulterating the Word of God." [3] Let us convince ourselves that the more intimately we know Jesus, and the more intensely we love Him, the greater will be our influence in instructing and in drawing souls to love and imitate Him. Jesus "taught every day," and throughout the day: His love

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 12. [2] 2 Cor. v. 20. [3] 2 Cor. ii. 17.

of the souls of men and zeal for the glory of His Father ever impelling Him to do this. The same spirit animated St. Paul, as he himself declared: "If I preach the Gospel, it is no glory to me: for a necessity lieth upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."[1] Yet how can this be the spirit of one who spends his time in balancing words or rounding off periods, or amassing together flowers of rhetoric in order to evoke admiration and please the eye and ear of his listeners. Let us then avoid in our teaching every kind of vanity, levity, and affectation, all far-fetched nicety of expression, or extravagance in denunciation, for these ill beseem one who is an ambassador of Christ, and "by whom Christ Himself exhorteth."

Third Point.—When Jesus finished preaching He returned to Bethania. The Evangelist, St. Luke, tells us that Christ preached during the day, and at night went out of the city; and St. Matthew says that He went to Bethania. Though the people gathered round Him from the early morning to listen to Him, though they had triumphantly welcomed Him into the city, yet no one proffered Him hospitality, so that He had to pass the night on Mount Olivet or go for shelter all the way to the house of Lazarus in Bethania: nor was there any one to break bread with Him. Let us learn from this how to value the applause of men and the acclamation of the crowd; let us learn, too, the selfishness, ingratitude, and thoughtlessness of the world, which can allow us to labour and wear ourselves out for its benefit, but will not so much as give us shelter, or food to appease our hunger. Let us then rejoice to be found worthy to share in the same treatment that Jesus received, and for His sake to undergo neglect, contumely, and the pinchings of poverty.

Be careful to make a fervent colloquy, and end with the "Our Father."

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 16.

THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD VIEWED IN GENERAL.

As it is impossible to consider all the mysteries of the Public Life of our Blessed Lord in detail, we here comprise in one exercise some general examples and principles which may be drawn from them.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus, after His prayer, fasting, and temptations in the desert, entered upon the great work which He had come to accomplish, and how during three and a half years He laboured for the conversion of the world.

Prelude 2.—Let us view in imagination the cities of Palestine, with the towns and villages through which He passed preaching His Gospel, working innumerable miracles, and conferring the richest benefits upon all, through His zeal for the glory of His Father and His love of the souls of men.

Prelude 3.—Beg light to understand the lessons and examples of apostolic virtue which our Lord has given us, and grace to carry them out in practice according to our state.

First Point.—Let us consider how long and carefully our Blessed Lord prepared for His Public Ministry. (α) To this end He directed the exercise of all the private virtues of His home-life for thirty years. (β) He entered upon it in the performance of an act of astounding humility, placing Himself amongst sinners that He might be accounted as one of them.[1] (γ) And when Heaven interposed by a supernatural vision, He withdrew at once into the desert, there to fast and pray. Who, then, can consider it too much to devote years to study and exercises of piety, to a scrupulous safeguarding of purity and the cultivation of every virtue,

[1] St. Matt. iii. 13.

in order to prepare himself for receiving so exalted a vocation as that of the priesthood? The character of a true priest does not come out ready formed like a bronze casting from the mould, but as a statue of precious marble, it is delicately and laboriously fashioned by the skilful handling of both hammer and chisel. And this careful manipulation should be continued even after we have entered upon the priesthood, if we are to become efficient ministers for God's glory, by promoting it first in our own souls. Let us inquire into our disposition as regards *poverty;* in regard also of *humiliations*, so necessary if we are to acquire true humility; examining how far we accept occasions of *mortifying* ourselves and of resisting our inclinations to dissipation and to display. Alas! how much there is in us to be corrected under all these aspects! How light we make of the time we give and the means we use for acquiring the knowledge and the solid virtue indispensable for all those who would promote the cause of God and the Kingdom of Christ in others.

Second Point.—How did Christ conduct Himself in His Public Life?—(*a*) In everything He did or said He sought purely and wholly His Father's glory and the good of souls, ignoring both Himself and His own glory, interest, or convenience. (β) He chose as companions simple, obedient, and humble men, who according to the estimation of the world were ignorant and unworthy of Him. (γ) He laboured chiefly among the rude, illiterate, and poor. With Him there was no preference for the rich, the noble, or the learned—in truth, if He had a preference it was for little children, and for those who were despised by the world. (δ) His manner bore in it no affectation of learning, nor effort to please the ear, but He explained simply those eternal truths which are so eminently profitable for the soul, though by no means flattering to the senses; and in doing this He adopted in language a style familiar and well suited to the capacity of the least instructed, making use of parables, similes, and examples. He won all hearts by His affability and benevolence, and

inspired the greatest sinners with a holy confidence. He dealt sternly only with the obstinate, the proud, or the hypocritical; while to all others He was sweetness and charity itself, most tenderly considerate and compassionate. (ε) His every act was marked by words and deeds of kindness. (ζ) For Himself He cared nothing—He preferred that He should be homeless and houseless; for His food He depended on charity; and His apparel, though decent, was that of a poor man. Above all He never preached what He did not first practise Himself, knowing how essential this is to real success.

Third Point.—What were the fruits of His labours? They have most certainly become vast since the preaching of our Lord, co-extensive in time and space with the world itself. This work however He has accomplished through the labour of His instruments, for during His own life He had only a few followers, mostly of the poorest, and though crowds gathered round to listen to Him, the result was but inconsiderable. Again, His labours were requited generally with contradictions, persecutions, and insults on the part of jealous priests, envious Scribes and Pharisees, from princes and the slaves of worldly passions—towards all of whom He exhibited the prudence of the serpent combined with the simplicity of the dove. It behoves us also to bear well in mind that if they thus persecuted the Master, they will likewise persecute us. Our willingness to share in the like obloquy is the surest sign of real zeal, and of our fruitfulness in souls. Let us dread the applause and approbation of men, for such as this were a poor result to attend upon our labours. Let us rather rejoice and exult when men persecute us.

End with a colloquy and the "Our Father."

THE THIRD WEEK.

INTRODUCTION.

NOTE.—1. In the preceding contemplations, and especially in those of the "Kingdom of Christ" and "The Two Standards," we have been labouring to acquire the spirit embodied in the third degree of humility as taught by the lessons and actions of our Blessed Lord, a spirit which is the securest disposition for making a good election; and thus we have reached the main point, so to speak, of the Spiritual Exercises. The rest, embracing those of the third and fourth parts, are intended chiefly to confirm and strengthen us in this spirit. It constitutes the folly of the Cross, briefly epitomized by St. Ignatius in the eleventh and twelfth Rules of the Summary of the Constitutions of his Society.[1]

2. We may further observe, that in the second part we have to detach ourselves from all inordinate affection for riches, honour, and other exterior objects, whereas in this third part, we cut off every form of self-love, and offer ourselves to undergo willingly any of those sufferings which the true friend of Jesus Christ must expect, seeing that all who live piously in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.[2]

3. In meditating upon the Passion of our Lord we may regard it from various points of view. It may be considered as bringing out in dark and terrible relief the

[1] *Direct.* xxxv. [2] 2 Timothy iii. 12.

horrible nature and malice of sin, and the reckless violence of human passion.

It gives us also a sublime idea of the dignity of the human soul, and the value set upon its salvation. We see in it the grandeur and the infinite nobility of character of Jesus Christ, who through love for us, of His own free choice and solely for our advantage elected to suffer the torments, disgrace, and death of the Cross. It is from this last point of view that we should here contemplate the mysteries of His Passion, thereby to arouse in ourselves such a spirit of love and generosity as will enable us to offer up cheerfully the sacrifice resolved upon by us in the election which we have made.

4. That we may the better appreciate the greatness of the love manifested towards us by Jesus Christ in the mysteries of His Passion, and at the same time our obligation to render to Him a due return, St. Ignatius adds three points to be considered in every meditation. Besides the Person, words, and actions involved in each mystery, we are to fix our attention on what Christ suffers and wishes to suffer in His Sacred Humanity; on the manner in which His Divinity makes its presence felt, only by enabling Him to suffer more; and on the fact that He is suffering all this for me personally. Our Lord suspended during His Passion the influence of His Divinity except in so far as this intensified His sufferings, by reason of the supreme dignity of His Person, of the extreme delicacy, tenderness, and sensitiveness of the Body which He had assumed, and which His Divine nature supported to endure what would have otherwise caused it to succumb, while at the same time it invigorated the faculties of His Soul to feel His torments of mind and body all the more keenly, as well as the cruelty, ingratitude, and injustice perpetrated against Him. In his third point, St. Ignatius urges upon us the universality of the sacrifice offered up by our Lord and the greatness of His personal love for us in His Passion, inasmuch as all His sufferings were freely accepted and welcomed, not only for mankind in the mass, but for each one of us

individually, as St. Paul tells us, and consequently each man must hold himself responsible for the whole of what our Lord endured.[1]

5. These considerations will produce in our souls feelings of most true sympathy, of profound sorrow, and of a tender compassion, a desire to share in the drinking of His chalice, to imitate His resignation, charity, and humility, and the other virtues which He exhibited in His sufferings.

6. We must not forget that He endured each bodily torment interiorly and by anticipation from the moment of His Conception until His Passion and Death.

7. While considering who it is that suffers, we must recall how infinite He is in perfection, not only as God, but also as Man. We must take into account His royal descent, His high reputation for power, holiness, and wisdom, the acquaintance of all classes with His Person, His fame as a Prophet and as an eminent worker of miracles.

8. In regard of the disposition with which Jesus suffered we must reflect that He did this freely and spontaneously, out of intense love for His Heavenly Father, and for us individually, and that His longing desire of sufferings far exceeded all that He either did or could suffer.

9. It is to be noticed that in this third part the second Addition should be changed. As soon as we awake we must recall the subject of our meditation, and whilst dressing and washing must excite ourselves to grief and compassion for the great sorrow and suffering of Christ our Lord. As to the sixth Addition, we must turn away from all joyful and exhilarating thoughts, even though good and holy, and must occupy our minds with memory of the labours and pains of our Blessed Lord, thereby to promote in ourselves kindred sentiments of love and gratitude and sympathy. In the tenth Addition, we must join our penances and sufferings with those of our Lord, offering them up to Him in the spirit of love

[1] Galat. ii. 20.

and thanksgiving for all that He was suffering for us, and with a strong desire to keep Him company in the torments and Death which He so freely underwent for our sakes.

10. In the contemplations of the Passion, St. Ignatius places Jesus before us as a model of the third degree of humility, inasmuch as He chooses by preference labours, watchings, and constant war against the rebellion of the flesh, of the senses, and of worldly love, substituting instead of these poverty, ignominy, sorrow, and pain.

11. In our colloquies also we ought to reason and make our petitions according to the subject-matter of the contemplation, in proportion as we find ourselves affected by desolation or consolation. We ought to desire some special virtue or dispose ourselves for making some particular sacrifice. Finally, we should ask for that which we desire regarding any matter of moment. Moreover, we may make either one colloquy, or three, according to the subject-matter and our devotion: one to the Mother, a second to the Son, and a third to the Heavenly Father, as in the Contemplation of "Two Standards."

It will be an additional help in these contemplations, if we review the argument of St. Ignatius respecting the four classes of creatures mentioned in the "Foundation," with regard to which we were to preserve a holy indifference.[1]

[1] Conf. *Constit. S.J.* part vi. c. 4, and Rules of *Sum.* xi. xii. xxiii. xxiv. xxv.

THE LAST SUPPER.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall the history how our Blessed Lord partook of the paschal lamb along with His Apostles; after which He washed their feet, and then instituted the Adorable Sacrament of His Precious Body and Blood.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we are ourselves present in the Supper-room, and observe everything that is said and done.

Prelude 3.—Let us entreat our Lord to excite in our hearts sentiments of sorrow, compunction, admiration, and gratitude towards Him who for our sins is about to undergo His Passion.

First Point.—As His Passion drew near, Jesus frequently referred in His discourses with His Apostles to the sufferings which awaited Him in Jerusalem; and once when Peter sought to dissuade Him from them, he drew upon himself the reproach of the tempter: *Vade post me, Satana, scandalum es mihi, quia non sapis ea quæ Dei sunt, sed ea quæ hominum.*[2] Now, He advances before His Apostles, who were full of dread, knowing the great risks to which He would expose Himself in Jerusalem.[3] They go to the Supper-room, which was ample in size,

[1] "And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you, before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And having taken the chalice, He gave thanks, and said: Take and divide it among you. For I say to you that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till the Kingdom of God come. And taking the bread, He gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is My Body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner the chalice also after He had supped, saying: This is the chalice, the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you." (St. Luke xxii. 14—23. Comp. St. Matt. xxvi. and St. Mark xiv.)

[2] St. Matt. xvi. 23.

[3] St. Mark x. 32.

and carefully set out, as though Jesus was about to celebrate a festive banquet, though the lamb to be eaten was the figure of His Death, and it was His intention to go forth from that chamber to begin His journey to the grave. As soon as all were seated He discloses to them the ardent desire of His Heart,[1] He tells them of the cruel treachery of which He will soon be the victim, yet so far from showing any sign of fear He says to the traitor, "What thou art going to do, do quickly."[2] After this He offers Himself to His Father, begging that His impending Passion and Death may serve to manifest His Divinity and glorify His Name. Thus did He manifest His vehement longing to suffer in order that He might accomplish our redemption and glorify God His Father.

Let us learn from our Lord this lesson, that pains, torments, and persecutions ought not to prove a source of dread and terror to one of His true companions, but rather a subject of joy, because they give us an opportunity of imitating Him and of glorifying His Father. Self-love, sensuality, and worldly principles may say to us, as Peter said to Jesus, *Absit a te, Domine; non erit tibi hoc*, in the hope of dissuading us from suffering; but Jesus assures us, *Oportet ire ad Jerusalem, et multa pati*, it behoveth to go to Jerusalem to suffer much and be slain; for whoever will lead a perfect life must encounter crosses, hardships, and insults, and therefore should prepare earnestly and cheerfully for them. Let us then pray that we may have such generous desires, and let us offer ourselves in union with our Blessed Lord to embrace whatever sufferings God may be pleased to send us in regard of poverty, humiliations, and contempt, or which our election may entail, and which, if rightly made, must involve some sacrifice.

Second Point.—Jesus washes the feet of His Apostles. —Whilst they were yet at supper, our Lord arose, took off His upper garment, put on an apron, and with His own hands prepared a vessel of water, as though He

[1] St. Luke xxii. 15. [2] St. John xiii.

were their servant. Then, kneeling down, He washes the feet of each Apostle, and dries them with the towel, nor does He pass over even Judas, though He knew that he had sold Him for five pounds and would betray Him with a kiss. Let us weigh the words of St. Peter, *Domine, tu mihi lavas pedes?*[1] TU: the Son of God, the Lord of the Universe, the Master of Creation, the most holy, the most noble, the most worthy of all honour, who sittest at the right hand of the Father, and hast the Seraphim for Thy footstool. MIHI: Dost Thou wash the feet of me, a poor fisherman, an ignorant and rude peasant; and wash them with Thine own almighty hands! Oh! how grand a lesson is taught us here!

Jesus was about to enter upon the fourth great step in His mortal life, and as He began with humiliation in His Incarnation, came into the world with humiliation, and commenced His Public Life with humiliation, so He wills to begin His Passion with the same. When shall we learn this first condition of belonging to Him? Into what an abyss of self-abasement should not our proud spirit cast itself at the sight of the Lord of angels and men, humbling Himself, even in their presence, so low through love for us and the desire to teach us by His own example!

Well might St. Francis Borgia feel amazed when, in his contemplation, he went to humble himself at the feet of Judas and reflected that he had been forestalled by our Blessed Lord at the Last Supper; and on being asked what caused him so great confusion, gave for answer that he found the Son of God already kneeling at the feet of Judas. Let us also bring home to ourselves the words: "If I have washed your feet, you must also wash one another's feet; for truly the servant is not greater than his Master, nor the Apostle greater than Him who sent him." And knowing this theoretically, we shall receive the blessing of reducing our knowledge to practice. If we are to do anything great for God, or if we are to attain any perfection in our state, we must lay

[1] St. John xiii. 6.

the solid foundation of humility, and this we can never hope to do except by the way of humiliations.

Third Point.—Jesus institutes the Holy Eucharist.—We see our Lord full of love towards His own even to the last. Taking bread into His blessed hands and lifting up His eyes to His Heavenly Father, with a Heart inflamed by love for us, He blessed it and transubstantiated it into His own sacred Body, leaving this Sacrament to His Church in memory of His undying charity towards men. Oh, the beneficence, power, and wisdom of our Lord. He gives us Himself, He can do no more[1]—He gives Himself under the form of bread and wine, that He might be our food, and that we might be intimately united to and made one with Him. And He does this at the very time when man's ingratitude was plotting how to employ the utmost efforts of its malice against Him. Admire the infinite goodness, liberality, and meekness of our dear Lord. What return can we make to Him who bore to us so wonderful a love, and who thus hands Himself over to us for our sake. Is it too much to love Him most truly in return, to love only what He loves; to choose for our portion poverty, contempt, and humiliation? to take the offensive against carnal, sensual, and worldly love?

[1] St. Ignatius in the third point of this meditation says: "Jesus instituted the most Sacred Sacrifice of the Eucharist as the *greatest* proof of His love," &c. With reason does he call it the *greatest;* for although our Lord has said, "Greater love than this no man hath than that he lay down his life for his friends," and this because as a mere man he has nothing more to give, yet our Lord, who was God and Man, could devise and furnish greater proof still. In His Passion and Death He sacrificed Himself for us for some hours, but in the Eucharistic Sacrifice He offers Himself with equal intensity of love, of merit, and of devotedness from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, and He will continue to do so until the end of time. Again, in the Eucharistic Sacrifice we have the real memorial of His Death upon the Cross, with the additional privilege of being able to feed upon His Sacred Flesh and Blood, thereby becoming members of His Body and partakers of His eternal glory. Moreover, He gives us this Holy Sacrament notwithstanding His clear foreknowledge of all the irreverences, outrages, and sacrileges to which He will expose Himself, not only from heretics, but also from bad Catholics.

Should it not make us blush for shame that in the election we may have made and in its consequent sacrifice, we can imagine we are making any competent return for what He has done for us? And what return have we made to Him as present in the Blessed Sacrament? With how great coldness and indifference do we treat Him; how rarely do we go to visit Him in His solitude and abandonment! How grudging we are of the time we spend with Him there. Alas! though He condescends to be pleased with any little attention which we show to Him, and is ever open-handed to bless us, we show Him but scant respect and reverence?

Let us then in our colloquy pour out our whole soul to Him in shame and confusion, our hearts filled with compunction and tender gratitude, while we say the *Anima Christi*. Let us offer up His Sacramental Presence to the Eternal Father, and in union with His Sacred Body and Blood let us pray for what we desire, and end with the "Our Father."

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us make an act of faith in the presence of Jesus Christ in the tabernacle, and prostrate ourselves before Him.

Prelude 2.—Let us implore an intimate knowledge of this Mystery, and intense love of Jesus in this Holy Sacrament.

First Point.—Let us reflect that He dwells here fulfilling His promise: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[1] But why, O Jesus, are You here? why thus shut up and a prisoner for nearly nineteen hundred years? It is not to redeem us! Nor is it necessary in order to give us grace. No!

[1] St. Matt. xxviii. 20.

it is because Your delight is to be personally and bodily amongst us.[1] His love seeks for and desires the presence of the object of His love; and lest we might be overpowered by the sense of His majesty, He veils it. He is content to dwell in nooks and corners of cities, in towns and open country, on hillsides and in remote valleys; He will not allow any one to be deprived of His presence. And at all times He would have us enter into His royal presence without ceremony to converse with Him, at any hour of the day or night we are welcomed by Him with open arms, always sure of a hearty reception. He is ever ready to console us, to dispel our darkness, to soften our hearts, to wash away our sins, to strengthen our weakness, to bestow fresh graces. Oh, the thousand blessings we enjoy in His adorable and loving presence!

There is no need to envy the Apostles and disciples or the dwellers in Palestine who actually saw Jesus and heard His voice. We can have Him more nearly present to each of us. They were conversant with Him during the days of His infirmity and weakness, we possess Him in His state of glory; they had His presence at intervals, we have Him always, and can find Him at any time without having to wander far. Why are we so miserable and sad, so languid and disconsolate when we have the source of all happiness? why so blind and cold-hearted when we can always have recourse to the source of light and heat? How can we have behaved to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament thus thanklessly?

O my God, grant that we may henceforth make Thy tabernacle our home, and, as Thy priests, live by the food and the life that dwell in Thy tabernacles.[2]

Second Point.—Let us consider the Life of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist. It is the compendium of all His wonderful works. He is mysteriously born at the bidding of His minister, the altar becoming another

[1] "My delights are to be with the children of men." (Prov. viii. 31.)

[2] "Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord: they shall praise Thee for ever and ever." (Psalm lxxxiii. 4, 5.)

Bethlehem, and the solitude of the tabernacle being as His hidden life in Egypt. Those gathered round it remind us of the humble shepherds who paid homage at His Birth. In how many places is His dwelling as poor and cheerless and unvisited as was that of His home for nearly thirty years at Nazareth? Here too He is obedient not to Mary or Joseph, but to His poor and often unworthy ministers. Here He is offered up as a perpetual Victim and Holocaust to His Eternal Father. As during His Public Life He went about ever doing good,[1] so since that in the Eucharist He has continued to instruct, admonish, console, enlightening the blind, raising the dead, healing all spiritual diseases, and working all the good that is done in the Church. In It we have the representation, renewal, and continuation of all the sufferings of His mortal Life, for though in His glorified state Jesus cannot sorrow nor suffer, yet the affronts and vile treatment of His creatures in His regard cease not to be equally real. He ever maintains the condition of a victim, entering into the breasts of men, as into a sepulchre, that is often neither reserved for Him nor clean; while He too often sees Himself treated with as little respect or reverence by those who come into His presence as He was by the rabble who surrounded Him during His Passion. And alas! how many, like Judas, dare to give Him the traitor's kiss! To say nothing of the foul blasphemies and outrages perpetrated against Him by heretics and infidels, in the sacrilegious spoliation and desecration of His altars and churches. Yet He is silent and patient, and, out of His ineffable charity, meekly bears all these vile affronts. Let us learn to bear in our turn, in imitation of His example and in union with Him, the scorn and contempt of others, charitably forgiving and praying for those who injure us. This much at least we can do, through His grace, even if we are too faint-hearted to accept obloquy with joy.

[1] Whom "God anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts x. 38.)

Third Point.—Let us consider the ultimate end of our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament. It is, that Jesus may make us one with Himself, and deify us, so to speak, through a life of grace now and of glory hereafter. In the Eucharist we have an extension of the Incarnation, inasmuch as Jesus unites Himself with each of us and makes us participators of His Divine Nature, for "we are made one body and one flesh with Him."[1] It could never enter into a mother's mind to think or desire to be transformed into food for the nourishment of her child! And yet the Babe of Bethlehem, the Carpenter of Nazareth, the Crucified, makes Himself one flesh with me! He who is being adored by angels in the fulness of His infinite glory, enters our wretched bodies, our cold and ungrateful and corrupt hearts, and becomes one with us. How unable we are to realize it! Yet His love urges Him to do all this, so great is His desire to eat this Pasch with us; nay more, He threatens us with spiritual death unless we receive Him, and promises us life eternal if we satisfy His longing.

For this end He calls His omnipotence into exercise, disregarding space and time, as well as His infinite ingenuity and wisdom, and exposes Himself to unsparing outrage and blasphemy. Oh! the love of His mighty Heart! And consider the nature of that Food! It is His living and glorified Flesh—His blessed Soul, in which are all the gifts, treasures, graces, and infinite merits of the only-begotten of the Father, and together with these His Divine Nature. This and more He is ready to give us daily, and if sickness prevents our going to Him, He is ever prepared to come to us at our bedside, and to be our Viaticum on our journey from this world to our eternal home.

And, what can we do in return? Is it too much that we should give ourselves to Him, our body and our soul in return? Alas! how worthless is the best that we have to offer, and yet what little there is of good in it is His

[1] St. Augustine.

already on a thousand titles, whereas the bad in it comes solely from our wretched selves. Let us try by the force of our love to make the offering less unacceptable; by a love that gives practical evidence of its existence in the close imitation of His life of solitude, of self-denial, of long-suffering and of humility, and especially in the constancy wherewith we carry out the sacrifice to which we have pledged ourselves by our late election.

Let us now beg these graces through the intercession of our Lady and of our Blessed Lord, and let us implore the same from God Himself, through the humiliations and love of His well-beloved Son in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. End with the "Our Father."

If time allows, the usual repetitions of the two preceding meditations may well be made, followed at night by an application of the senses to the same subjects.

DISCOURSE OF JESUS AFTER THE LAST SUPPER.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—After the departure of Judas, Jesus addresses His Apostles in words of consolation and encouragement; and impresses upon them the duty of union with Himself and with one another. He announces to them the severe persecutions and trials which the future has in store for them, inspiring them at the same time with strength to bear these; and prays for them specially in His colloquy with His Eternal Father.

Prelude 2.—Let us join ourselves in spirit to their company.

Prelude 3.—Beg with earnest desire a profound sorrow at the sight of God our Lord about to suffer reproach and

[1] St. John xiv. xv. xvi.

disgrace, torments, and death for our sins; and beg Him to grant us a share in His Spirit.

First Point.—Well might the Apostles look to Jesus for some words of comfort. They knew that one of them was a traitor, that another was to deny their Master, and that He Himself would shortly leave them; they also knew that the Priests and Pharisees were concerting together how to seize and put Him to death. He bids them "not to let their hearts be troubled;" for though He is about to depart from them He will prepare a place for them, provided only that they believe in God His Father, and in Himself who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Then Philip with ingenuous candour asks Jesus to show them the Father to whom He is going. Upon which He explains to them that He is consubstantial with the Father, that he who sees one also sees the other, because He is in the Father, and the Father in Him, that He speaks in the Father's Name, and works in Him. Again, He encourages them with the promise that if they believe in Him and in His teaching, even though He withdraws His visible presence, they shall have power to work greater wonders than they had seen Him perform, and that He would do whatsoever they asked His Father in His Name, or whatsoever they asked of Him in His own Name. Thus they are to possess their souls in peace by a lively faith and a firm hope in Him and in His promises; and must also derive courage from a practical love of Him in the keeping of His commandments. He further adds, "I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Spirit, to be your comforter, guide, and advocate, who will abide with you and will dwell within you."

He then goes on to say, that He will not leave them orphans; that He will return to them, after He has risen from the dead, and "they shall then know that He is in the Father, and they in Him, and He also in them;" and that the "Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, shall enlighten them to remember and understand all those things which He had taught them."

Finally, He concludes this part of His discourse by pronouncing peace, not a worldly unreal peace, upon them, and bids them out of love for Him not to be afraid, but to rejoice that He is going to His Father. He assures them of this beforehand, in order that when it comes to pass a few hours hence, they may remain firm in their faith. Oh, who could conceive such tender care and love on the part of Jesus for these poor fishermen! He thinks not of Himself, of the anguish of His mind and Heart, if He can but comfort and encourage them! He is all anxiety to prepare and strengthen them so that they may resist the terrible temptation with which they will shortly be assailed; but for Himself He has no care. And yet, O dear Lord, there is no one to think of Your afflicted Heart, or soothe it by a word of sympathy! O my soul, let us try to comfort Him by offering ourselves to share that sorrow of which we are the cause, and to join Him in His self-sacrifice by fidelity to the resolutions which we have taken in our election.

Second Point.—Jesus commends to them closer union with Him, and amongst one another.[1] He explains to them by the comparison of the Vine how truly "He is in the Father, and they in Him and He in them." He is "the true Vine," the perfect Vine which the Father has planted on earth, in the Incarnation and assumption of our human nature, that He may through the wine of His Precious Blood save and redeem the world: and His disciples are the branches. If they remain united with Him they shall bear fruit, but if they cease to be so united they shall be cast off by His Father. Whilst they remain in Him, they will, through the merits of His Passion and Death, bear much fruit in the supernatural order, being one with Him by Divine faith and charity. But the moment this union is dissolved all supernatural virtue is gone, and with it all supernatural life, and no matter how great their natural gifts may be, they will in the end be cast into the fire, where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is never extinguished."[2] He tells them,

[1] St. John xv. 4, 12. [2] St. Mark ix. 43.

moreover, that as long as they abide in Him, they may petition for what they wish and it shall be granted them; while they will give great glory to God by promoting the salvation of souls, and proving that they are faithful disciples to Himself.

He adds to these words a marvellous declaration, which must have filled the spirits of Heaven with wonder, when He likens His love for them to that of His Father towards Himself, with the view of inducing them to remain constantly and closely in His love! This they will do if they observe the precepts which He has given them, as He also observes those given to Him by His Father; so shall they be a source of joy to Him, and they themselves also shall be filled with His joy.

From this He passes on to the duty of loving one another in fraternal charity. In His Apostles He requires a love far more perfect, far greater than that of ordinary mutual kindliness; "they are to love each other as *He* has loved *them!*" even to the shedding of their blood for those whom they love, though that love may be unrequited or repaid only by hatred and persecution. Thus are they to act out of the love they bear to Him who is their Lord and Saviour, and who has shown them special marks of His love by selecting them from the rest of men for the great work of the Apostolate. Nay, He insists a second time upon the obligation of taking to heart His commandment that they should love even their enemies, according to the example He has set them in loving the world which hated Him, and in being about to lay down His life for it; and though that world will hate them also, yet they must be prepared to sacrifice themselves in like manner for the salvation of souls. This hostility and hatred, as He shows them, is manifested on His account, and because of His and their teaching and example, which are opposed to and are condemnatory of the judgment and conduct of the children of this world. Let us ourselves weigh well the necessity of union with our dear Lord: for as long as this exists we cannot go astray, we shall dwell in the light of truth, and shall enjoy super-

natural life. It is true we shall suffer with Him, but He will enable us to endure to the end, and will make our sufferings sweet and will help us to turn them to our future glory. In our dealings with our neighbours let us ever bear practically in mind that we are bound to love all, even those who injure and persecute us. This may be hard to our human nature, but with the grace of God, which will not be wanting to us, nothing is impossible. Besides, Jesus commands us to it, and with the help of His blessing we will obey.

Third Point.—Jesus foretells the persecution of His Apostles, and encourages them to be firm in meeting it. The Jews would excommunicate them, and would flatter themselves, in their guilty ignorance, that they were doing a good work in putting them to death. On hearing these things, sorrow naturally filled their hearts, and the more so as He was about to depart from them. Yet it was for their benefit that He was going, and He will send to them the Paraclete, who will impart to them all truth, will enlighten and strengthen them, whilst He will at the same time convict the world of *sin* in refusing to believe in Him, notwithstanding His teaching and miracles; of *justice* in refusing to recognize His own justice and that of His disciples; of *judgment*, by exposing the falsehood and criminality of Satan and his followers in this world.

They would like to know more precisely whither He is going, but He delays to add to their sorrow by detailing to them His approaching sufferings; with deep emotion, however, He announces the grief that His Passion will cause them, adding that it will later be turned into joy at His Resurrection. He forgets Himself, thinks only of their sorrow and distress, and promises them that He will shortly return, and will fill their hearts with gladness, such as the world knows not of, and of which it cannot despoil them. Moreover, when He does come back, His Spirit will teach them all things, so that they will not need to ask Him any more questions as they had hitherto done. He concludes by urging upon them greater earnestness and constancy, and confidence in prayer to His Eternal

Father, who loves them because of their love for Himself and of their faith in Him, notwithstanding that this faith was still feeble. Let us admire the charity and compassion of our dear Lord. He knows their weakness, and that in their terror they will abandon Him and leave Him in the hands of His enemies, yet He does not betray the slightest impatience or resentment, but employs every means to encourage and comfort them. Who can help loving Him for His disinterested devotedness and tender compassion. O my dear Lord and Saviour, grant that we may never more abandon Thee.

Offer up your colloquy to our Blessed Lord, and say the *Anima Christi*. End with the "Our Father."

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how, after the discourse and the chanting of the hymn were finished, Jesus went with the Eleven to Gethsemani; how He left eight at the entrance, took Peter, James, and John into the garden, and going a little apart from them there knelt down in prayer.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves our Lord kneeling during His prayer and His agony, and the Apostles asleep.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg for what we earnestly desire, the special grace of sorrowing with Jesus sorrowful, of sharing with Him in His bitter anguish, of tears and compunction of heart along with Him who suffers so intensely for us and for our sins.

[1] "When Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden into which He entered with His disciples. And Judas also, who betrayed Him, knew the place, because Jesus had often resorted thither together with His disciples. . . . Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth," &c. (St. John xviii. 1—4.)

First Point.—Remember how our Lord, though outwardly so calm, was yet inwardly full of revulsion and disgust, overwhelmed with horror, and drowned in a sea of sadness,[1] so that He must have died had He not supported His temporal life by His Divine power. At length His countenance, which is the joy of Paradise and of the earth, became disfigured with agony. And this, first by reason of the contact of His Soul with all the iniquities of men, the burden of which is heaped upon it, in order that He may make condign satisfaction for them to the Divine justice.

Next His imagination presents to Him an insight into all the terrible torments He was to undergo, an anticipation which is often far more agonizing than the reality. In addition He can probe the real malice and heinousness of each sin. To be in doubt whether we are guilty of a mortal sin acts sometimes like madness on the brain, and almost upsets our reason. What, then, must have been the horror of Jesus to behold Himself as the great sin-offering, accounted really guilty by His Father; especially by a Father so beloved!

Lastly, He foresees that men will not only prove ungrateful for all His sufferings, but will even turn them to their own greater condemnation: nay, worse than this, that some of those whom He has specially chosen, and cherished in the sanctuary, will turn His torments to their terrible ruin and destruction. Oh! let us bewail our own sins, which have borne their share in causing Him all this agony; let us heartily detest them, and offer up to the Father this sorrow of our dear Lord in atonement for them, and let us entreat the pardon of the Son through the merits of His fearful torments.

Second Point.—We must contemplate our Lord persevering in prayer amidst His agony,[2] resigning Himself entirely to the will of His Heavenly Father, while He always repeats the one prayer, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," "Not My will, but Thine be done." He does not

[1] "My Soul is sorrowful even unto death." (St. Mark xiv. 34.)

[2] "And being in an agony He prayed the longer." (St. Luke xxii. 43.)

in His anguish seek comfort in bemoaning Himself, or in pouring out His griefs into the ear of His disciples, but seeks it in solitary prayer to His Father; and the greater His anguish is so much longer is His prayer, though He can only continue to repeat the self-same words.

Let us take home to ourselves this great lesson, and in our hours of wearisomeness, disquiet, desolation of spirit and melancholy, let us fly to our God, and, like Jesus, pray the longer; but this must be done in solitude, avoiding the company of men, and not leaning too much on their sympathy: with our Blessed Lord let us say always, "Yet not my will but Thine be done." For the Divine will is our sovereign good, all perfect in itself, for the obtaining of which pains, anguish, and even death are well endured.

Let us rest assured that in the pursuit of perfection, and especially in the Apostolic life, we shall meet with trials that will cause us much repugnance, fear, and sadness: *Non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat.* Yet even then the prayer of faith and confidence will bring us strength and consolation, and will enable us cheerfully and readily to bear every hardship.

Third Point.—Let us behold Jesus prostrate on the ground while the sweat of Blood oozes from the pores of His skin, soaking through His raiment and moistening the earth.[1] What must the malice of sin be which so strains and racks the sensitive Heart of our Lord as to force His Blood through its natural barriers. Who has done this terrible deed, and caused this bloody sweat? It is we ourselves, alas, who have done this. Let us then at least mingle a few tears from our eyes with the red tears of Jesus, and offer to Him an act of profound contrition. Let us not decline to accept any trial which God may send us, no matter how repugnant to our nature; even though it may cause our hearts to break. Jesus has drunk the chalice for us, and let us drink ours for Him. "What shall I give back to the Lord for all

[1] "And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." (St. Luke xxii. 44.)

He has done for me? I will drink the chalice of my salvation, and my strength shall be in prayer to the Lord." Let us present to His Father this first Blood spilt in our Lord's Passion, and through it let us beg for the graces we desire.

Fourth Point.—We should in the fourth place consider the conduct of the Apostles. Jesus had told them on the way to the Garden that they would all be scandalized in Him that night; words which intensified their fears and sadness, only slightly allayed by the words of encouragement which followed, "After I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." On reaching the Garden, He entered it with Peter, James, and John, who had witnessed His Transfiguration, and bidding them pray they might not enter into temptation, He Himself retired to pray. Sorrow however made their eyes heavy, and they fell asleep. Little did they know the awful transfiguration taking place so near them. For now the Divinity of Jesus withdrew its support from His Humanity, except so far as was necessary to enable it to endure those most terrible sufferings, which would otherwise have separated Soul from Body. He came once more to them and awakening them, and begging of them to watch and pray, He again withdrew: but this time also they fell fast asleep. Alas! poor human nature. Not an hour ago they had protested their loyalty and fidelity, and their readiness to die with Him: now they cannot watch for an hour with Him! He had told them that He was worn out and prostrated by His anguish, that He was exhausted in mind and body, tortured with agony, yet they slept on all the same! Oh, what must have been the feelings of the Sacred Heart of our dear Lord, to find even His three privileged Apostles, whom He loved so tenderly, so dead to all He was enduring! "He looked for some to sympathize with Him and found no one." His Father's face was turned away from Him, His Blessed Mother was not allowed to be with Him, His Apostles are too drowsy to heed Him; there is no one to think of Him but His enemies, who are preparing

in the city to come out and seize Him. O dear Lord, grant that we may not, like the Apostles, forget Thy counsel, to "Watch and pray." Grant us Thy grace that we may never neglect our daily duties of meditation and examination of conscience, on which our perseverance in Thy service so much depends; and by neglect of which we shall be in danger of turning our backs on Thee and abandoning Thee in the hour of trial.

Say with all fervour the "Our Father."

THE SEIZURE OF JESUS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us recall how Jesus is betrayed by His own Apostle, is seized by His enemies and dragged as a criminal into the city and along the streets of Jerusalem.

Prelude 2.—Let us stand by and observe what passes.

Prelude 3.—Beg light to see how Jesus, the very soul of honour, welcomes oppression and ignominy for our sakes, and pray for grace to imitate His spirit of fortitude under trials and persecution.

First Point.—Mark well that Judas is not asleep. He is an Apostle, instructed in the school of Christ, favoured with the gift of miracles, a daily witness of the power, the wisdom, and the sanctity of His Master. Can no other be found, even among our Lord's enemies, to betray Him?

We see how those who have been the most favoured of God, fall the deepest when blinded by their passions.

[1] "Behold Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves. . . . And he that betrayed Him had given them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully. And when he was come, immediately going up to Him he saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him. But they laid hands on Him and held Him. . . . And they brought Jesus to the High Priest." (St. Mark xiv. 43—53.)

Judas was the slave of the predominant passion of avarice. To indulge this he ingratiated himself with the priests, and so was led on to his act of enormous treachery. To gain his end he had recourse to craft and cunning, and chose as the scene of his crime the very spot in which he had so often prayed along with Jesus. He arrives there at the head of a company of soldiers bearing torches and lanterns, approaches his Master, and even dares to kiss Him! thereby notifying, as agreed beforehand, the Person of Jesus to His enemies. In a spirit of the deepest humility, let us fill our souls with fear and horror when we contemplate the crime of Judas and his terrible fate. There is in truth no depth of sin into which even a Religious may not fall, if he begins to gratify any unruly passion or neglect any duty, especially that of prayer. We should beware of yielding inordinately to feeling and tender affection, to a desire of humouring and pleasing others, or of gaining their esteem and applause. We must watch with all diligence over the first beginnings of evil, and we shall thus avoid the danger of betraying our Blessed Lord and incurring eternal perdition.

It is only when we take into account the evil done by this act of treachery to the credit and reputation of his Divine Master that we can estimate how much pain and affliction Judas must have caused our Lord's most loving Heart. It was in the first place a crime of the blackest ingratitude perpetrated against one who had chosen him to be a disciple and Apostle, and had conferred such signal favours upon him. It directed an insult against our Lord charged with malice at every point. We see this in the selection made of the place and hour at which Jesus was wont to join in loving discourse with His disciples, it dared to mock and deceive, if possible, his Lord and Master by a false salutation, it paraded before His enemies the fact that Jesus was being betrayed by one of His own followers and intimate friends; it was in the eyes of the priests and doctors a virtual rejection of His claim to be Divine,

seeing that His seizure would be secured by their holding Him fast. In a word, it presented the Saviour before them as an object of contempt and obloquy.

Nevertheless, our meek Lord admits Judas to His embrace, and calls him by the endearing title of *friend*. Oh, then! when we ourselves meet with ill-usage and offensive treatment from those who should be the last in the world to behave so towards us, let us learn to imitate Jesus betrayed and insulted by His own disciple; and let us lay at the feet of our dear Lord every feeling of aversion or vindictiveness which our corrupt nature or the devil may stir up within us.

Second Point.—It is the general opinion of commentators[1] that when our Lord's person was indicated to the soldiers by the approach and salutation of Judas, their eyes were either dazzled by the splendour of His majesty, or prevented from recognizing Him, and that they remained stunned and motionless until He advanced to meet them. Although wild with excitement and rage, they waited until He put the question, "Whom seek ye?" On their replying, "Jesus of Nazareth," He answered, "I have told you that I am He."[2] At His words they fell flat on the ground, trembling with fear: nor would they have stirred had He not given them strength to rise, and by yielding Himself up into their hands, showed with what truth He had declared, "No man taketh My life away, but I give it up of Myself."

Many persons, like the soldiers, when asked the question, will profess with their lips that it is Jesus of Nazareth whom they seek to please in this or that office, in this or that employment, whilst their real motive is that they may gratify their inordinate self-love; and thus they too act injuriously and dishonourably towards God.

[1] Toletus, in Joan. xviii.

[2] "As soon, therefore, as He had said to them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground. Again, therefore, He asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am He. If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way." (St. John xviii. 6—8.)

From such our Lord hides Himself, bringing their selfish designs to naught.

It is especially worthy of notice that in the very beginning of His Passion He was pleased to manifest His Divine power by working a miracle, in testimony that He was not the victim of force or necessity, but gave Himself up of His own free-will; whereby He would teach us to accept in a cheerful and willing spirit every kind of labour and suffering, not through necessity or in a spirit of compulsion, nor as a malefactor, but in order to be like Him of whom it is written, "He was offered because He Himself willed it."

Third Point.—In the spirit of tender sympathy contemplate the ill-usage which our Lord experienced at His capture.

The hour had come, the hour of darkness and of the spirits of evil. The Temple guard and servants of the priests seized Him and bound Him tight, fearing lest He might escape. Listen to their shouts of exultation when they succeeded in taking Him prisoner. Mark the insults and the blows they inflict on Him as they drag Him violently along to the house of Annas, who was one of the chief leaders in plotting His death, and convicted of being a miserable prevaricator in his holy calling.

Ask yourself, who is this apparent robber and malefactor? It is the all-mighty and all-holy Son of God, over whom the angels were adoring. It is the Son of Man; the most beautiful, the most wise, the most holy, and the gentlest and most loving Man that ever lived. He that alone is most worthy of all honour, adoration, and praise, cheerfully accepts ignominy, contempt, and shame: nay, He actually restrains, we may say, His Divinity so as to augment His sufferings: and all this for each of us, out of love and a desire to atone for our sins. And what have we done for love of Him in return? How often have we promised to follow in His footsteps and to imitate His example, thereby giving glory to His Father, and comfort to Himself, and sanctifying our own souls! And yet, alas! how often, like the Apostles, have we

left Him and fled, or perhaps worse, joined with the rabble in seizing Him and binding Him fast. But what shall we do in future? We will keep Him company in His ignominious journey, with profound sentiments of grief; and, reflecting on the thoughts and affections which He entertained in His Soul, we will thence draw new motives to advance in virtue and perfection, and pray for more ardent desires to share His ignominies with Him, if this be the will of God and for His greater glory.

Lastly, let us make the usual colloquies, and end with "Our Father."

If time allows, we may make two repetitions of the two preceding meditations, and an application of the senses, as the last exercise before supper.

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS.[1]

Prelude 1.—After binding our Lord, the soldiers drag Him along through Jerusalem to the house of Annas, where they made bitter accusations against Him, one of the servants giving Him a blow on the face.

[1] "Then the band, and the tribune, and the servants of the Jews, took Jesus and bound Him; and they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphas, who was the High Priest of that year, and Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the High Priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the High Priest. But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple therefore went out and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter. She saith to him: Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples. He saith: I am not. The High Priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine. Jesus answered: Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them: behold, they know what things I have said. And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest Thou the High Priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil give testimony of the evil, but if well, why strikest thou Me? And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest." (St. John xviii. 12—24.)

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit accompany our Lord and Master.

Prelude 3.—Pray for what you stand in great need of —intense sorrow and confusion, at seeing Jesus submitted to such pain and indignity for our sins, and all this through love for us; let us beg then that we may be allowed to share in His sufferings.

First Point.—We now contemplate our dear Lord, somewhat revived by the visit of the Angel from Heaven strengthening Him, while He meekly permits His enemies to bind Him as though He were some dangerous malefactor. They roughly drag Him along, buffet Him, heap insults and blasphemies upon Him, and in their rage and malice indulge in every kind of outrage against Him, while He remains all the time silent, like a sheep that is led to the slaughter not opening its mouth. There is no one in that crowd to take His part or to defend and protect Him. The people who stand and watch the mob dragging Him through the streets, inquire what may be the cause of all the disturbance. On being told that Jesus of Nazareth is being led before the High Priest, many of them must conclude that He is a deceiver, a false pretender, that His miracles must have been the result of knavery, and perhaps they condemn themselves for their credulity in having believed in Him. Others believe Him to be guilty because one of His own followers has betrayed Him, while all the rest have fled and left Him. They reach the house of Annas, and whilst they wait for admission they give way to their feelings of scorn and hatred, making faces at Him, clenching their hands in angry threats, and turning Him into ridicule. Truly the words of holy David are verified: "Many calves have surrounded Me, fat bulls have besieged Me. They have opened their mouths against Me, as a lion ravening and roaring."[1]

Jesus all the while silently and gladly welcomes each of these outrages, which He endures for our sakes and for our salvation. He prays for His cruel tormentors, and

[1] Psalm xxi. 13, 14.

offers up their persecution to His Father in satisfaction for our wretched vanity and pride. O my soul, what return can or shall we make to our Saviour for all that He has undergone for our sins, and for all this love that He has shown towards us? Can we hesitate to brave the odium and hostility of the world, if only we thereby promote His glory and discharge our duty to Him. Have we the heart to court the favour and applause of others, and like cowards cringe before those who oppose Christ and His Mystical Spouse, the Holy Church? Is it thus that we shall keep our pledge to follow Him in opprobrium and humiliations? O my dear Lord, give us grace to be loyal and true to Thee, and to follow Thee along the way of the Cross.

Second Point.—Jesus is led before Annas. As being simply the father-in-law of Caiphas, the High Priest of that year, Annas had no right or authority to sit in judgment upon Jesus; it is only as a concession to his ambition and hatred that our Lord is brought before him. Let us contemplate the meek and patient Jesus as they drag Him into the presence of this unauthorized judge, bound with ropes like some dangerous criminal. He is confronted with the unworthy priests, the scribes and elders, all filled with anger and venom because He had denounced their corruption and hypocrisy, had tried to protect the populace against their avarice and extortion, and had won the respect of those who listened to His teaching. He stands there gentle as a lamb, surrounded by ravenous wolves. Then Annas rudely questioned Him regarding His disciples and His doctrine; concerning the first He makes no answer, though He knew that one of their number had been bribed to betray Him. The second question He answers by appealing to those who were present while He was teaching daily in the Temple: for Jesus knew that His judges were well acquainted with all He taught and had often heard Him, and further that they merely desired to gain a pretext for His destruction.[1] Upon this a servant stepped forward and

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 55; St. Mark xiv. 49—54; St. Luke xxii. 53—57; St. John xviii. 13, 15—44.

dealt Jesus a savage blow upon the cheek! Oh, wonderful patience of Jesus in bearing with the reckless insolence of man. Mark how the Lord of all Heaven and earth is struck by a mere slave—the great Creator of the Universe by one of the lowest of His creatures. Infinite Majesty, before whom the pillars of Heaven tremble and the eternal hills melt away, is struck in the face by a vile worm of the earth; yet, though the angels were horrified to see their King thus insulted, He Himself accepts it readily in order to pay the full penalty for our sins of pride and self-esteem. Let us ask ourselves in what way do we bear with insults coming from others. How often, alas! instead of following the example of Jesus, we harbour a spirit of vindictiveness, being not content until we feel fully satisfied that we have been avenged and our enemies humbled. Yet we flatter ourselves that all this indignation is shown in the cause of justice, and that we are therein but following our Lord's footsteps.

Third Point.—Jesus is led away from the house of Annas. Whilst He had been detained in his presence, Caiphas, the High Priest for that year, had ample time for assembling the members of the great Council to try Jesus. The pride of Annas having been now flattered, and his curiosity gratified, he bids the soldiers take Jesus away and conduct Him to the court of Caiphas. Emboldened by the impunity accorded the wretch who struck our Lord, and by the applause with which his act of blasphemy had been rewarded, the cruel rabble vie with each other who shall insult and outrage Him the most. Let us contemplate our dear Lord as He delivers Himself into the hands of this mob, and allows them to hasten Him along the dark streets to the palace of Caiphas. His body is faint and weary after the three hours' agony and loss of blood, His limbs are galled by the tightness of the ropes with which they are still bound, yet His Soul is free to make its offering to His Eternal Father of all that He endures in behalf of His tormentors, and to pray for their forgiveness. Though surrounded and closely hemmed in by His enemies, He is left alone in His

sufferings, with none to comfort Him, such is the result of the solemn promise made a few hours before by the eleven Apostles.[1] The spirit, it is true, was willing as long as Jesus was their visible protector, but both spirit and flesh were weak indeed the moment that sensible help was removed. Let us at least realize His unfailing presence, and lean upon Him in the fullest sympathy and confidence. This we can do by preserving a close union with Him in prayer and daily meditation, by frequently visiting Him in the Sacrament of His love, by often receiving Him in Holy Communion. Let us learn to mistrust ourselves and at the same time place all our trust in Him who is faithful and will not suffer us to be tried above what we are able, if only we cling to Him.[2]

Conclude with the "Our Father."

JESUS BEFORE CAIPHAS.[3]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—After our Lord had been taken before Annas He was next led to the palace of Caiphas the High Priest, where the doctors and chief priests were assembled, although the night was far advanced. When confessing

[1] Isaias lxiii. 3, 5.

[2] St. John xviii. 6—10.

[3] "But they holding Jesus led Him to Caiphas the High Priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled, and the chief priests and the whole Council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put Him to death, and they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all came two false witnesses, and they said: This man said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it. And the High Priest rising up said to Him: Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace, and the High Priest said to Him: I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ the Son of God. And Jesus saith to Him: Thou hast said it. . . . Then the High Priest rent his garment, saying, He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy; what think you? But they answering said: He is guilty of death." (St. Matt. xxvi. 57—66.)

Himself to be the Son of God in answer to a question solemnly put to Him by Caiphas, He is declared to be guilty of death and is handed over in custody to a band of soldiers, who spend the night in heaping insults upon Him. St. Peter has meanwhile yet again denied his Lord, but being filled with sorrow and compunction on meeting the gentle and significant glance of Jesus, he went forth and wept bitterly.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves present in the court of Caiphas, and later on in the company of the guards beside the fire.

Prelude 3.—Beg that you may know our Blessed Lord more intimately in His humiliations, and in His distress of mind and compassion for St. Peter, and may receive grace to share in His two-fold spirit.

First Point.—In order to carry out their iniquitous intention of sentencing Jesus to death with some show of justice, the chief priests and Council suborn false witnesses; but not even from these can they draw any evidence sufficient to disprove the complete and notorious innocence of our Blessed Lord. Their groundless and incoherent calumnies, to which He listens meekly and silently, served only to irritate Caiphas, so that rising up hastily he demanded of our Lord if He had nothing to say in His defence. But Jesus vouchsafed no reply. On being adjured, however, in the Name of His Father in Heaven, to say whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, He at once broke silence, and though He knew it would cost Him His life, He declared fearlessly and distinctly, "Thou hast said it." Upon this the exultant and hypocritical High Priest rent his garment as though in horror, declaring Jesus to be a blasphemer, worthy only of death—a sentence which received the approval of the whole Council.

Second Point.—Our Lord was then delivered into the hands of the rude soldiers and guards, who proceeded to insult and persecute Him. With how great reason have the saints and servants of God placed this scene before their minds, offering themselves up to endure

injuries, calumnies, torments, and even death itself, in the promotion of virtue and in the war against vice. When we look upon that Divine face, disfigured with blows and besmeared with spittle, and yet listen in vain for a single word of reproof or complaint, let us at least resolve to bear our own trials and sufferings with patience and in silence, if we cannot feel that joy under them which the Apostles did who in after-years went forth from the Council rejoicing at being found worthy to endure for Christ every variety of contumely. But let us learn also, when God's glory requires it, to speak out boldly, to rebuke evil tongues, to combat false maxims, to admonish and reprehend others, and be ever ready to defend the truth. It does really confer a high honour upon us that the world should treat us as it treated Jesus Christ.

Third Point.—It was his lack of this spirit that led to St. Peter's fall.[1] When accosted in the house of Caiphas by a servant-maid, and again by two others, he with oaths and curses denied that he even knew our Blessed Lord. He who a short time before had made such loud protestations and vaunted of his courage, and had even in an impulsive act drawn his sword to oppose a whole company of soldiers, is panic-stricken at the sound of a passing remark. Oh, the sad frailty of man! The stoutest pillar trembles and falls before a breath of air.[2]

At the very time when our Lord is suffering insults and ill-usage, and hears the sentence of death passed on Him to the greater glory of His Divine Father, the prince of His Apostles, chosen to promote the same great

[1] "Now, when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the High Priest; and when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him, she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I neither know nor understand what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court, and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him began to say to the standers-by: This is one of them. But he denied again. And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter: Surely thou art one of them, for thou art also a Galilean. But he began to curse and to swear, I know not this Man of whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again." (St. Mark xiv. 66—72.)

[2] St. Augustine, tr. 113.

work, abandons and denies Him through fear of doubtful suffering. Why was this permitted? It was to teach us that whoever will be a companion of our Lord must nerve himself to bear hardships and crosses, or he will recoil basely before the first encounter. But it were well to consider the remote causes of Peter's fall. In the first place, he had been warned by our Lord of the necessity of much prayer, and of watchfulness, if he would prepare himself for temptation; nevertheless, he had given way to sleep, though twice admonished of his danger. Again, he follows our Lord but only at a distance, and from a motive of curiosity, to see how the matter would end. Lastly, he tarried with the soldiers and others, and mingled in their company, warming himself at the fire. All these details are not set down by the Evangelists without special reason, and they are intended to impress upon us three important lessons: that we stand in extreme need of constant prayer, without which no fervour nor excellence of intention will enable us to resist the temptations of flesh and blood which we shall have to encounter. Moreover, if we begin to withdraw to a distance from our Lord by allowing evil or less perfect motives to influence us, such as temporal interest, worldly esteem, vanity, or self-indulgence in the discharge of the duties of our state of life, we are on the high road to ruin, and shall undoubtedly fall sooner or later into sin. Lastly, we stand in great need of prudence and care in our intercourse with others. If we spend our time in frivolous conversation with our friends, we shall soon imbibe worldly views and maxims, and, betrayed through human respect, dispraise what we should approve and approve what we should denounce. Let us then seriously examine ourselves on these three points, and if we find that we have not kept our promise to God, let us turn at once to Jesus in the truest grief and contrition as St. Peter did. Let us break off all worldly ties, withdraw from all dangerous occasions, and shed bitter tears over the life we have hitherto been leading. In our colloquies let us implore the grace of returning to a faithful imita-

tion of our Lord in bearing silently and meekly any ignominy and contempt which in His good providence He may call upon us to undergo.

End with the "Our Father."

JESUS BEFORE PILATE.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord having been declared by the Council worthy of death, was taken before the tribunal of Pilate that the sentence might be put in execution by his authority. There He observed a profound silence, under the most horrible calumnies, and only breaks this silence when asked if He was "King of the Jews," to declare that He was the true Messiah. Afterwards He was put in comparison with Barabbas, a robber and a murderer, was rejected in his favour, and was condemned, though innocent, to be crucified.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we stand in the court of Pilate.

Prelude 3.—Conscious of having through attachment to sin rejected our Lord, and being full of compassion for Him and of shame and confusion as regards ourselves, let us beg a most sincere contempt for our baseness, seeing that our guilt is the true cause of the ignominy and dishonour that are heaped upon Him.

First Point.—Early in the morning the priests with the elders and scribes and the whole Council led our Lord in chains to the court of Pilate, through the very

[1] "And straightway in the morning the chief priests holding a consultation with the ancients and the scribes and the whole Council, binding Jesus, led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate. And Pilate asked Him: Art Thou the King of the Jews? But He answering him saith: Thou sayest it. And the chief priests accused Him in many things. And Pilate again asked Him, saying: Answerest Thou nothing? behold in how many things they accuse Thee. But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate wondered." (St. Mark xv. 1—5. Comp. St. Luke xxiii.; St. Matt. xxvii.; St. John xviii.)

streets along which the crowd had conducted Him in triumph only four days before; but He is now fettered and bound as a malefactor and blasphemer, by command of the priests and learned men of the city, who claimed to be upright and holy. Let us listen to the charges urged against Him! He has, it is said, been a disturber of the public peace, promoting tumult and sedition among the people. He has forbidden the people to pay tribute to Cæsar. He has aspired to be King, repeatedly giving Himself out for the Messiah. Meanwhile Jesus, all meekness, stands manacled in the presence of Pilate, with eyes modestly cast down, listening in profound silence, not uttering a word in His own defence, insomuch that Pilate was struck with wonder and amazement. And yet the charges against Him referred to very grave points, to sedition, to actual rebellion against the Roman authority, and to ambitious usurpation. How eloquently does not this silence appeal to us! Our Lord had taught His disciples to despise all worldly honour, to bear injuries and humiliations willingly, and now He resolves by this public example to leave human pride no room to put in an excuse for acting otherwise. He who is God, and is innocence and sanctity itself, appears as a criminal, a seducer of the people, and as one worthy only of death, nevertheless He maintains the strictest silence and will not utter one word in self-defence, even though by the simplest manifestation of His infinite wisdom He could have confuted these gross calumnies, as easily as by a simple word He created the light of heaven. But we, even when admonished in a gentle and kindly spirit by Superiors or by friends for our own good, fly to our own defence, catch at every apology, or ingeniously palliate our defects, considering ourselves quite misrepresented, and our faults to be grossly exaggerated. At the same time we justify our remonstrances on the plea that our honour would otherwise suffer, or prejudice or detriment would result from our silence. And yet was not the honour, nay, the very life of our Lord, of infinitely greater dignity and value than the honour and life of all

men put together, although He suffered in patience and silence as if He were a criminal.

Let us not delude ourselves in this matter, for it is a poor sign of progress in virtue; nay, it would be a serious mistake to resent too keenly that which we have already engaged ourselves to take patiently, according to the perfect example which our Lord has given us.

Second Point.—Pilate took Jesus aside,[1] and deeming the charge of aspiring to be a King as the most important, put the question directly to Him, "Art Thou a King?" Our Lord in reply gave an account of Himself and told Pilate that His Kingdom was not a temporal one, that He stood in need of nothing that this world could give Him; and that He was born and came into this world to bear testimony to the truth. This so convinced Pilate of His innocence that he returned to the people and declared he could find no fault in Him. Behold here a lesson for those who as priests are often accused of interfering in secular and political matters; let us convince men by our conduct, that our kingdom is not of this world, that our thoughts and interests are far otherwise, that our one ambition in life is to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and to make known to men the great and sovereign truth, which is God Himself. In this way we shall confound our enemies, so that it will be said of us, "I find no case against this man." The world expects from us that we shall endeavour with might and main to denounce abuses, to rebuke the ungodly, and to promote the cause of virtue; and as long as we direct our efforts to these ends, although it will, undoubtedly, oppose us, it will at heart admire our honesty and single-mindedness. Once, however, let it perceive that we entertain secular views,

[1] "Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus and said to Him: Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? Pilate answered: Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee up to me; what hast Thou done? Jesus answered: My Kingdom is not of this world." (St. John xviii. 33—36.)

seek temporal interests, and meddle in worldly affairs, rest assured that it will then begin to persecute and calumniate us.

Third Point.—Pilate, being persuaded of the innocence of Jesus,[1] tries to save Him by the strategy of a time-server and slave of human respect. Thus he proposes to release Jesus at the Pasch, according to the custom of setting free, at that time in each year, some criminal at the choice of the people; for he presumes that if the choice is offered them of asking for the liberation of either the notorious Barabbas, or of Jesus, they will give the preference to the latter. How fearful an outrage to place the meek and spotless Son of God in competition with a villain, guilty of sedition and murder! Yet envy and hatred so blinded the priests and people alike, that with one voice they called out that Barabbas should be set free, and Jesus be delivered over to be crucified, being willing that the guilt of His Blood should be laid upon them and on their children. Oh, how deep a wound should not this infatuation cause in the heart of every true servant of God! what tears of grief and contrition must spring up into the eyes of those who reflect that as often as they have committed grievous sin, they too have joined in the same cry, "Not this Man, but Barabbas"—that sensuality, carnal love, or worldly pride, have drawn them also to abandon their dear Lord, and hand Him over to His and their own enemies, to crucify Him again and make a deliberate mockery of Him.

In truth, our crime is far greater than that of the Jews, for they knew not fully what they were doing, and

[1] "Now upon the solemn day the Governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas. They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ? for he knew that for envy they had delivered Him. . . . But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the Governor answering, said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas." (St. Matt. xxvii. 15—21.)

had they known they would never have crucified their God;[1] whereas we know what we do when we not only render the sufferings of Jesus useless, but actually turn them to our greater condemnation, as being the penalty paid for the degrading gratification of our own inordinate inclinations, whereby we squander His Most Precious Blood. Of all this was our dear Lord conscious when He suffered, yet He cheerfully accepted each suffering for us; and would if necessary have undergone it over again through His undying love for us. What then are we prepared to do in return? Alas! hitherto we have done but little. Will it be too much to share His chalice with Him? It may be bitter to our natural taste, but love and gratitude will make it sweet to us, and by the help of perseverance and fervent prayer we shall overcome our weakness.

In our colloquy let us pray that His Sacred Blood may be shed into our hearts and cause a contrite and humble spirit to spring up therein.

End with the "Our Father."

JESUS IN THE PRESENCE OF HEROD.

The preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Pilate's efforts to liberate our Lord proving ineffectual, he sends Him to Herod, the cruel and incestuous Tetrarch of Galilee. All along the way the mob shouted and cried out against Him and forced their way into the judgment-hall of Herod. Our Lord made no reply either to the accusations of the priests or to the manifold questions of the Tetrarch; consequently the latter in his disappointment and rage brands our Lord as a fool, and orders a fool's white garment to be put on Him, and then contemptuously sends Him back to Pilate.

[1] "For if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

Prelude 2.—Let us accompany our Lord on the way to and from Herod's palace.[1]

Prelude 3.—Let us pray for our Lord's spirit of humility and self-abasement.

First Point.—How great is the contrast between this Tetrarch and our Lord. Herod, haughty and inflated with pride, and cruel, is surrounded by his guards: Jesus, stands meek and gentle and resigned, His hands bound with fetters. Herod treats his prisoner as if He were a magician, and is most anxious to witness some exhibition of His wonderful power. Jesus, who has hitherto refused to indulge Herod's curiosity by proclaiming His heavenly doctrines or working any miracles before him, now appears in his presence in the ignominious attitude of a criminal arraigned on the capital charge of sacrilege. Herein our Lord teaches us to contemn vainglory and worldly honour, preferring to be vilified and despised, when He could, had He so chosen, have gained great esteem and admiration. When shall we learn this lesson? When shall we practically convince ourselves of the great truth conveyed to us in the doctrine and example of our Lord, that worldly glory and esteem is a serious obstacle to the glory of God and to our real welfare? It is a delusion to make either a parade of our birth, talents, and erudition, or an ostentatious display of poverty. Interior self-contempt, mortification, modesty, and humility in word and deed are the true dispositions for great exploits in the cause of God and of souls, and remove from us countless dangers and temptations to sin.

Second Point.—We may consider that, probably, Herod

[1] "But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if the Man were of Galilee? And when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days. And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad, for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him: and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered nothing. . . . And Herod and his army set Him at nought: and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate." (St. Luke xxiii. 6—11.)

began in a friendly manner, as may be inferred from the narrative, by proposing to our Lord many questions, and very likely suggesting that He should perform some miracle, and so rescue Himself from the hands of His enemies. Our Lord, however, acted as though He did not hear, and made no answer. Meanwhile the priests and scribes were loud in their accusations, but received from Him not a word nor sign in response. On many other occasions He had spoken so eloquently, as to draw crowds after Him and charm them with His words, and had wrought countless miracles in favour of others, but now, when it would save Him from death, He will not say a word nor work a single miracle. He will speak and act when His Father's glory is at stake, but not for Himself, or to satisfy idle curiosity, or to frustrate His own design to suffer for our sakes, through love of us. See in this another lesson of preserving silence, that we may remain unnoticed, unless the cause of God or good of our neighbour calls upon us to speak. Yet, do we not often seek to fill the most conspicuous posts and places, and to shun those which promise but little display and much labour and suffering? Is not this a sure sign that we seek ourselves and our own glory, instead of the glory of God or the salvation of souls?

Third Point.—On his side, Herod was greatly disappointed and indignant, and vented his rage in most abusive and contemptuous words. He despised our Lord as a fool, and along with his guards made a mockery of Him, ordering them to cast a white garment over Him, in token of idiotcy, and then sent Him back to Pilate, the mob following Him all the way with scoffs, laughter, and derision. Thus is the infinite and eternal Wisdom, the wisest and most perfect of men, accounted and treated as a fool! Oh! poor benighted world, a world truly infatuated and perverted in its judgments! Who can be so foolish and so faithless to our Lord as to court the esteem and favour of a world which even still treats Him like this. Who so cowardly as to fear its condemnation, instead of rather despising and shunning its applause?

Let us add three fervent colloquies to our Lord, imploring the grace of loving and putting into earnest practice the third degree of humility.

End with the "Our Father."

THE FLAGELLATION.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—When our Lord was brought back to Pilate, this weak and vacillating Governor, though fully persuaded of the innocence of his prisoner, yet being afraid of pronouncing His acquittal, devised an infamous plan for escaping the responsibility of His condemnation. He resolved that our Lord should be so cruelly scourged that the sight of His macerated Body would move the heart of every beholder to pity, appease their hatred, and obtain His release. Jesus therefore is stripped in the court of Pilate and scourged.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine ourselves witnesses of this humiliating and unjust punishment.

Prelude 3.—Pray for a feeling of earnest compassion for Jesus and great horror of our own sins, which have inflicted such intense agony upon Him.

First Point.—The nature of this torment. It was the first bodily suffering inflicted on our Lord, but in the intention of the judge, and in the desire of the Jews, it was to be final. Pilate had resolved to release Him when it was concluded, and therefore the Jews trusted that He would not be able to survive it.

Try to imagine the malignant rage and violence of the executioners, instigated partly by the devil, and partly by their desire to win the applause of the priests and people, as well as probably by bribes offered by the Scribes and Pharisees,[2] whose jealousy and thirst for His Blood

[1] "Then therefore Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him." (St. John xix. 1.)

[2] Suarez, t. 2. pt. 3. disp. 35; à Lapide, in Matt. xxvii.

had grown all the fiercer from having been so long resisted and restrained by authority. Our Lord sees Himself encircled by this dense mass of infuriated enemies all thirsting for His Blood, and anxious to see Him writhe under the lash, while He, so meek and gentle, offers Himself for the scourging.[1]

Let us reflect here on the terrible force of unbridled passions, which blind the judgment and after hardening the heart drag us into fearful excesses, while we discharge on the tender Body of our dear Lord a storm of stripes and scourges, according to the number and grievousness of the sins we have committed through the indulgence of our unlawful appetites. That we might satisfy these we have not hesitated to be guilty of outrage against God. Let us now with a lively sorrow detest our past blindness and cruelty, and through gratitude towards Him who has suffered so much from us and for us, let us offer up to Him our strongest and most predominant inclination, with a firm purpose to conquer it for His sake.

Second Point.—The manner of the Scourging. Our gracious Lord was stripped of His clothes and bound to the pillar, and was thus ignominiously made the butt of the scoffs and jeers of the impudent and shameless rabble; and moreover, this form of punishment was especially dishonourable and infamous, being reserved by Roman law for only slaves and the vilest persons. We could not bear to see even a dumb animal cruelly beaten; how then could we bear to see not a slave, not a criminal, but the Son of God, our delicate and virgin Jesus, innocence and holiness itself, the worthiest and most beautiful of men, condemned to be treated worse than a malefactor, worse than even a dog! to be scourged without any measure or law; where the sole aim is to give full vent to the fever heat of passion against His delicate Body, and, moreover, where the executioners, who have been bribed to do their worst, vie with each other which shall be the most inhuman and win the loudest applause. As to the kind of scourges employed, the Evangelists do

[1] "Behold I am ready for the scourges." (Psalm xxxvii. 18.)

not specify, but it is believed whip-cord lashes were first inflicted, and that then thorn-switches were used, the former causing the Body to become black and blue, while the other punctured and tore the flesh in countless places, and caused the Blood to gush out in streams.

But what thoughts were in our dear Lord's mind all this time, as with bended Head His eyes were fixed on the ground? With how penetrating a voice does His Sacred Heart speak to His Heavenly Father, appealing so eloquently to Him in our behalf! and offering up to Him each stripe, each wound, and the full tide of His Precious Blood, in behalf of us His cruel but fondly-beloved children, so that we may gain forgiveness and obtain grace to make a return of love, when we come to know the excess of His love towards us through the excess of shame and pain which He here endured for us.

Sometimes when we are exhorted to lead a more retired life, to be more earnest in mortifying our passions and subduing our inclinations, to be more observant of our rules, more assiduous in our studies, and the rest, we are inclined to think that too much is required of us. If so, let us fix our eyes on the Sacred Body of our dear Lord fastened there, so mangled, torn, and lacerated for us! At the first stroke He might most justly have exclaimed, "Cease, it is enough." This, however, He would not do; but with His bent Head and silent lips, His Heart accepts all with readiness, would have them strike yet more, dig furrows on His Body, and drain off His Blood. Yes, He would suffer all most readily in His Divine love of our souls, which are so dear to Him, and in His zeal for their salvation. Is it not shameful ingratitude that we on our part do so little, so very little, for Him who has suffered such pain and ignominy for us! How mean and unworthy is our conduct when we weigh in so grudging a spirit what we deem to be of obligation and what not. Let us then offer up our good-will to Him, with a firm resolution to labour to the utmost in His cause, and let us beg Him to give us grace to make that sacrifice at least which He intimated in our election He expected of us.

Third Point.—The end which our Lord set before Him in undergoing so terrible a torture was that He might render satisfaction for the sins of the flesh so common in the world, and for the gross pleasures and gratifications of the vice of impurity. Many indeed were the scourges which these sins deserved—*multa flagella peccatoris*—and these our dear Lord would receive on His Sacred Body—*multa flagella redemptoris*—that we might thus escape. When we behold our dear Lord lying prostrate at the foot of the pillar, and covered with wounds, our minds should recall those words of Deuteronomy: "As the eagle hovering over her young, He hath spread out His wings and hath taken them and carried them on His shoulders."[1] Jesus stretched over us the wings of His love, a love immense and incomprehensible, and received on His Body the strokes of Divine justice prepared to fall on us vile wretches; He is bruised and mangled, in order that we might be left free and sound. Surely, if we do not feel broken-hearted even at the thought of these things, our hearts must be sadly unimpressionable.

Another motive of our dear Lord was that He might make Himself an example to us how we ought to treat our own bodies. He was most innocent and infinitely holy, and His Body was perfectly subject to His Spirit and to reason; nevertheless He would suffer in His Body as an atonement for our sins. Now if He willed thus to reduce His flesh, how should we treat that flesh of ours, the indulgence of which has led us into so many sins, and which still exposes us to such serious risk of committing fresh ones? Are we not bound to chastise it and subject it to the spirit, to reason, and to faith? The saints, after contemplating this mystery, entered upon a holy warfare against their bodies: it caused them to bear about them the mortification of Jesus; and seeing Christ in suffering, they armed themselves with the same thought.[2] Wherefore, let us, kneeling at the feet of Jesus scourged, make a humble act of contrition, and consider carefully what penances we ought to adopt in future, not consenting to

[1] Deut. xxxii. 11. [2] 1 St. Peter iv. 1.

be without a wound ourselves while we see Him covered with them; for, as St. Bernard remarks in one of his Sermons on the Canticles, "A devoted soldier does not heed those inflicted on himself when he regards the wounds of the general who has endeared himself to all his men."

End with an "Our Father."

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The soldiers, after scourging our Lord, invented the cruel sport of crowning Him as a King. They therefore seated Him on a stone, threw over His shoulders a cast-off purple military cloak, placed a reed in His hand to represent a sceptre, and a wreath of thorns on His Head for a crown, and then brutally amused themselves by paying Him mock homage and striking Him on the Head.

Prelude 2.—Let us reverentially contemplate this scene on our knees.

Prelude 3.—Pray that you may imitate Christ's patience and humility.

First Point.—The intense pain of this torture to which our Lord was subjected may be gathered, *first*, from the quality of the thorns themselves, which were those of the sea-rush, and are long, hard, and sharply pointed; *secondly*, from the number of these penetrating in every place, for the crown was not a fillet, but covered the whole Head; *thirdly*, from the manner in which they

[1] "And the soldiers platting a crown of thorns, put it upon His Head, and they put on Him a purple garment. And they came to Him and said: Hail, King of the Jews. And they gave Him blows. Pilate therefore went forth again and saith to them: Behold, I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him. Jesus therefore came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them, Behold the Man." (St. John xix. 2—5.)

were interwoven, pressed close down, and driven into the temples by blows from a short, stout piece of wood; *fourthly*, from the duration of His torment, since our Lord wore this crown until His Death. Imagine, then, the agony it must have caused! An acute headache drives us almost wild, and any injury to the brain is most serious and agonizing because of the many veins, nerves, and delicate membranes which are collected there. How utterly impossible then to realize the terrible agony of that dreadful crown! Oh, let us pour forth our gratitude to Him for having suffered so much for us; let us make oblation to the Eternal Father of the Precious Blood thus spilt for our sins as satisfaction for our countless vain, proud, and impure thoughts. Who of us but must confess that he has helped to drive not one, but many thorns into the wounded Head of Jesus, nay, has over and over again driven and pressed them still deeper in? But as we look upon His Head thus crowned, what are the resolutions we should form? Are they not that we will embrace cheerfully troubles, hardships, the lack of comforts and conveniences, besides contempt from others, and will try to esteem these as a crown of glory, making us all the more like our Heavenly King? Let the children of this world seek diversions, delicacies, and pleasures, and crown themselves with roses, according to the spirit of the world, whereas for us who belong to the Body of Christ and bear His Name, such a crown would be one of pain and sorrow, seeing that *non decet sub capite spinoso membrum esse delicatum;* and when the thorns we share with Him penetrate and wound our hearts, the thought of Jesus will be as balm to them.

Second Point.—Consider the ignominy of this outrage upon the Kingly dignity of our Lord. It seems from the relation of the Evangelists that the perpetration of this was the sole aim of the soldiers. They therefore placed Him in the midst of the courtyard, where the rest of the soldiers were mustered, again stripped Him, and thus reopened His fearful Wounds. Then making Him sit on a stone, they put the reed in His hand, and a purple rag

on His shoulders, and fixed the crown of thorns more tightly upon His Head. This done, they began to scoff and jeer at and blaspheme Him; they knelt down before Him, and taking the reed struck Him on the Head with it; they spat in His face, and in every way ridiculed Him and blasphemously insulted Him until their malignity was satiated.

Try now to realize that this seemingly wretched outcast is no other than the Eternal Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords, He who sitteth upon His throne in the highest Heavens, and was even then the centre of the adoration of countless hosts of mighty and blessed spirits, that the vast universe of animate and inanimate creatures stood waiting to obey His slightest word; while the heavens and the earth both trembled at His presence. This is He who, through love for us, vile and ungrateful though we are, submits to be hailed as a mock-King, to be cuffed, kicked, spat upon, and covered with opprobrium. If we have any faith and gratitude, we shall assuredly not regard Him with idle wonder, but shall see revealed in His Divine face as in a mirror the deformity of our own pride and vanity, and the true excellence of humiliations and contempt; we shall fly from the first suggestions of pride as the source and origin of all sin, the cause of the transformation of angels into devils, the introducer of death and every misery into the world. There is in truth no other evil equal to this, seeing that in order to atone for it our Lord willed to undergo such supreme torment and ignominy.

Let us take ourselves to task for the many faults and failings into which this vice leads us, and, remembering how infinitely worthy we are of all contempt, let us beg of the Father to look upon the face of His Christ, and for His merits' sake, to grant us the virtue of true humility, so that having joy set before us, we may choose the shame, that we may thus be made like to His ever-Blessed Son.

Third Point.—The soldiers then stood before Him and cried out, Hail, King of the Jews. Though they spoke

in derision, the cruel soldiers did confess Jesus to be a King: His Kingdom, however, is not of this earth, but of souls which He has redeemed by His Precious Blood, overthrowing thereby the kingdom of Lucifer and of sin. He came into the world to bring it under subjection, and so to enter into His Father's glory. He has called us to follow Him, to labour with Him, to suffer with Him, that so with Him we may be glorified. We have hailed Him as our King, and have pledged ourselves to act on the offensive (*agendo contra*) against self-indulgence, against inordinate love of our friends and relatives, or of the things of this world. See here how our King carries out His intention, how much He endures to secure the victory, and set up His Father's Kingdom in our souls. We have offered to share His lot: to what extent have we kept our promise? Do we not still resent the slightest injury? Are we not disappointed if our words or actions do not meet with approval or praise? Do we not betray our miserable vanity by talking of self, or by undue attachment to our person and dress? Can we thus flatter ourselves that we are true followers of our King and Captain? O my soul, let us seriously enter into ourselves, and resolve to be honest in our professions of allegiance, and uncompromising in putting them into execution. With St. Augustine, let us be filled with shame at our past insincerity, and exclaim along with him, "Too late, O my Jesus, have we learnt to know Thee, too late have we loved Thee."

End with the "Our Father."

JESUS IS DELIVERED UP TO BE CRUCIFIED.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Pilate makes various efforts to set Jesus free. He strives to soften the hearts of the people by bringing Him forth before them; he then declares our Lord's innocence; but finally, through motives of fear and selfishness, solemnly condemns Him to death, with the same breath by which he pronounces Jesus to be innocent.

Prelude 2.—Let us imagine that we are ourselves amongst the crowd.

Prelude 3.—Beg of God that we may know our dear Lord more intimately in this mystery of His Passion, that our hearts may be melted with love and compassion for His sufferings, and may be more deeply imbued with His Spirit.

First Point.—Pilate presents Jesus before the people. Let us contemplate Pilate as the slave of human respect,

[1] "Pilate therefore went forth again and said to them: Behold I bring Him forth to you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him. Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them: Behold the Man. When the chief priests therefore and the servants had seen Him, they cried out, saying: Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Take Him you and crucify Him: for I find no cause in Him. The Jews answered him: We have a law: and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus: Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave no answer. . . . From thenceforth Pilate sought to release Him. But the Jews cried out, saying: If thou release this Man thou art no friend of Cæsar: for whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar. Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your King. But they cried out: Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them for to be crucified." (St. John xix. 4—16.)

though full of remorse at the consciousness of his criminal conduct, while he leads forward the gentle and innocent Lamb of God, that he may show Him to the multitude, saying: *Ecce homo*—"Behold the Man:" His Body is all bruised and covered with blood; His hair is matted, His beard torn, and His Head crowned with thorns, His eyes are swollen and all but closed, His hands remain bound, and His body is partially covered with a purple garment. So dreadful a sight struck the multitude dumb with horror, and they would have spared our Lord's life, had not the chief priests raised the cry of "Crucify Him."

Let us "behold the Man," and see the state to which our sins have reduced Him: "From the sole of His feet to the crown of His Head, there is not a sound place in Him." "He is a worm and not a man, the reproach of men, the outcast of the people." And yet, let us penetrate beneath this terrible sight, and fix our thought upon what is passing within His Soul. How noble and sublime are its aims and aspirations, having our interests, our benefit, our salvation, and our future glory for its only object. But nobler far, more sublime, and beautiful is His devoted and loving Heart! Not all this sea of affliction, nor all the ingratitude of man, can extinguish the love which burns within that breaking Heart.

Let us "behold the Man." Though standing there apparently so helpless, He has power, if He chooses, to scatter the multitude around Him, as easily as the wind whirls the autumn leaves through the air: or, if He chooses, He can at once restore to His afflicted Body all the beauty which it possessed when He was transfigured upon the mount. Or He might have summoned the Angel of death to have stilled for ever that brawling multitude: but Jesus loves us too much for that. He hath loved us so intensely that He will deliver Himself even to death for our sakes, because "His love is strong as, yea, stronger than death." We must all of us look upon and behold the Man, when He shall appear in great power and majesty, and then His enemies will cry out,

not indeed for His crucifixion, but for the hills to come and crush them, and thus hide them from the face of His justice and power. Let us then now with the eyes of faith behold the Man, let us fall down and adore Him, and beg of Him to clothe us with His grace, that we may follow after Him, according to the true law laid upon us, in opposition to the law of this wicked world, which put Him to death because He made Himself what He is, in fact the Son of God.

Second Point.—Pilate again questions Jesus. The Governor next asked Him about His origin, who He really was: but Jesus does not answer. Were He to declare His Divinity, Pilate might not understand, or might refuse to act upon His declaration, and so would add to his guilt. It may be that our Blessed Lord refused Him this further grace, because he had already refused to hear the truth.[1] Embarrassed by His silence, Pilate tries to extort an answer by menace and promise. "Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to set Thee free?" In His reply to this, our Lord acknowledged indeed his power, but warns Pilate against abusing it, as he will have to render an account for it to Him from whom all power is derived. The truth of these words, uttered with perfect calmness, intrepidity, sweetness, and majesty by our dear Lord, struck deep into the soul of Pilate and filled him with terror and dismay. His conscience stings him, and he resolves at all cost to release Jesus. Our Blessed Lord thus gives him an opportunity of doing his duty; but Pilate will again abuse it, as is ever the case with the slaves of a predominant passion. God is perpetually offering them grace to amend and overcome it; they resolve to do this and to set themselves free; but alas! they will not take the requisite means; and so continue to abuse God's mercy, until at length that mercy yields place to strict justice.

Let us look to ourselves. If through God's protecting love and mercy we are not the enemies of our dear

[1] St. John xviii. 38.

Lord, still, may we not in a certain sense be inclined to imitate too closely the conduct of Pilate? We know what God demands of us, what sacrifice He requires from us, if we are to correspond more perfectly with His grace, and thereby attain a higher perfection in our state of life. The power is granted to us from above to make the sacrifice, and we feel that we shall have to answer for the abuse of that power hereafter, yet how often do we not like Pilate seek to fulfil our duty, but through want of honesty and thoroughness, through fear of what it may cost us, we fail, and put off the resolution to some other time, which may never come. In this we imitate the conduct of those whom St. Ignatius places in the second category when treating of the "Three Classes," and so cut ourselves off from the true peace and happiness which belongs only to those of the third class.

Third Point.—The final sentence. The chief priests at length had recourse to the last means of forcing Pilate to pass sentence on Jesus. This was a threat to impeach him of encouraging high treason against Cæsar. Of all charges this was the most formidable in the reign of Tiberius. Pilate had already been accused of causing great discontent and frequent revolt. If now he was charged with fostering treason, his doom would be sealed. By this artful, obstinate, disloyal means, did their implacable hatred succeed in stifling all sentiments of justice and humanity in the heart of Pilate. He yields to personal interest, to human respect and cowardice, and becomes an accomplice of the High Priests in murdering the Son of God. Let us contemplate the feelings of our dear Jesus as He silently witnesses all that is passing. How great must have been His sorrow and anguish of heart while reflecting upon the ingratitude and fierce hatred of all ranks of His countrymen, thus clamouring for His death amid agonizing torture; and on the woes which their crime of deicide was about to bring upon their city and nation. Yet throughout that vast crowd there was not one to raise his voice in the cause of justice or come forward to remonstrate with the people.

"Then Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they desired, and Jesus he delivered up to their will." Let us picture to ourselves the cries of triumph which at once burst forth from the High Priests, the savage exultation of the rude mob now that they had got their Victim in their power. Mark how they vie with each other in ridiculing Him, striking Him, spitting upon Him, and mocking at Him. Like lightning the rumour spread through the city, and the crowds all hurried towards Golgotha, anxious to feast their eyes and satiate their thirst for blood on the sight of His cruel death. What a terrible scene must this have been! The wrath of God hath indeed come upon our Lord, the heavy weight of God's justice is pressing Him down. The sorrows of death have surrounded Him, the torrents of iniquity have burst over Him, and filled His Soul, yet He stands firm and unshaken. Like a rock in the midst of seething waters, He remains calm and resigned, and He even rejoices at the approach of the moment when by His Death He will put the seal on the constancy of His love, and will make adequate reparation for the offence of His Father's justice. What, too, must have been the feelings of His Blessed Mother, who, with the penitent Mary and the other pious women under guidance of the Beloved Disciple, made her way to the place of execution. Mind cannot conceive, much less can tongue express, the pangs which racked that Mother's heart. To see her only Child, her only Son, and such a Son, intellectually, morally, and physically the most perfect of men, so patient and humble, obedient under all the torments inflicted upon Him by His own ungrateful creatures, whom He still loves and will love until the bitter end. She shows herself worthy to be the Mother of her heroic Child, and even in the agony of her grief is resigned, while the prayer of her soul also is, "Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me: yet if it must be that I drink, not my will but Thine be done." She willingly offers her Son to be the sin-offering and the peace-offering for mankind. Next to the sublime figure of that Son, rising

above the strong sea of sorrow, stands unshaken the sublime figure of His Mother. *Eja mater fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris fac, ut tecum lugeam.* Oh, let us unite ourselves to our Blessed Mother in this awful hour, let us try to comfort and console her, let us fill our soul with intense sorrow and confusion at the thought that we are ourselves the cause of this heavy affliction, "because He loved me, did He deliver Himself up for me;" and let us pray that we may share with Jesus in His spirit, and thus in some way make amends to Mary for robbing her of her Son's help and consolation. *Fiat, fiat.*

Let us make a triple colloquy, to our Blessed Mother, to our Lord, and to the Eternal Father; end with the "Our Father."

JESUS IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Pilate hands our Lord over to the Jews, who refuse to have Him for their King. They lay the Cross upon Him, which is afterwards borne by Simon of Cyrene, and upon it they nail Him between two thieves.

Prelude 2.—Let us accompany Jesus on His way to execution.

Prelude 3.—Pray that we may know our Lord in His Crucifixion, that we may love Him intensely, and be made one with Him on the Cross.

First Point.—As the Jews persisted in demanding the Crucifixion of Jesus, Pilate at length gives Him up to them to do according to their will, though he knew that He was innocent, and at the same time suspected that He was more than man, seeing that his own wife had been

[1] "And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour, and he saith to the Jews: Behold your King. But they cried out: Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered: We have no king but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to them to be crucified." (St. John xix. 14—16.)

much troubled in her sleep, and had admonished him to have no hand in the death of this just Man. Pilate was also afraid by reason of the warning our Lord had given him of the consequences of his sin, although He acknowledged it was less grievous than that of the Jews, who were the chief authors and promoters of His Death. Notwithstanding, however, that warning, and the stings of his own conscience, he still sacrilegiously condemned the Lord God to be crucified, through fear that, if he refused, he might forfeit his office and the friendship of Cæsar. Into how many crimes will miserable human respect betray a man! The mind becomes blinded, the will paralyzed, and laws, whether human or divine, are trodden underfoot, rather than displease or disappoint a friend. So, too, it is often through human respect and fear of losing or offending a friend that we encourage undue affections and disregard our rules: and the dread of being despised or laughed at keeps us in a state of tepidity and indifference. Let us guard ourselves against so mean and cowardly a failing, for it caused the Death of God made Man. Let us rather be guided by the spirit that filled the Soul of our dear Lord while He heard Himself given up to His inhuman foes. How meek and gentle He was, how perfectly resigned to the will of His Heavenly Father, as calmly and courageously He accepts the sentence and goes to meet His terrible Death.

Second Point.—The way from the City to Calvary.[1] At once the Jews bring forth the Cross on which Jesus is to die, and place it on His shoulders that He may carry it to the place of execution, as a badge of infamy and the instrument of His torment.

The Cross, till then lying under so deep a stigma of infamy that whosoever touched it became legally unclean, has since become a badge of high dignity and honour,

[1] "And they took Jesus and led Him forth. And bearing His own Cross He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst." (St. John xix. 17, 18.)

being worn on the breasts of knights and on the crowns of kings, and worshipped on every Christian altar. Let us behold our Lord having a rope fastened round His neck as, bending under His burden, He staggers along up the rugged ascent, amidst peals of laughter, and jeers, and rude shouts, mingled with the blasphemous imprecations of the rabble and of the mob, who are led and encouraged by Priests, Pharisees, and Scribes. How long, with such a spectacle presented before our eyes, shall we persevere in harbouring our false shame? When, oh, when shall we learn practically this great truth of our religion, that to suffer derision, ill-usage, affronts, and injuries for the love of Jesus Christ is the most noble and most glorious of acts. We adore the Holy Cross because it was hallowed and consecrated by His touch. Why, then, shall we not receive willingly the ignominies of that Cross, made honourable and glorious by His divine example?

But besides the dishonour of carrying His Cross, Jesus had to endure the fearful pain it caused Him. It was formed of two large, thick, and heavy beams, strong enough to carry His weight, and even these were laid upon Him, and His poor Body was fearfully bruised and mangled, while His strength was exhausted through loss of blood, want of sleep and food, and the agonies of pain inflicted by the crown of thorns. Yet He must carry it, and so they quicken His faltering steps by pushing Him along, and slashing His quivering flesh with stripes, till every step tortured Him to death, so widespread was the pain all over His Body, and so terrible was the jar when the Cross struck against His Head, or jolted over the stones along the way. Thrice He fell, and then with kicks and blows they forced Him to rise, goading and dragging Him onward as though He were a senseless beast of burden. At last, through fear lest He might expire on the road, they eased Him of His burden, and obliged the stranger from Cyrene to carry it for Him. Oh, to what a fearful state has not His intense love for us reduced Him!

In beholding my Saviour thus overwhelmed beneath the weight of His Cross, I feel how much my own heart is oppressed by a different weight, that, namely, of my own ingratitude. How can I allow Him to suffer alone, and not at once rejoice in sharing the Cross with Him as Simon of Cyrene did? How can I for very shame draw a line at certain obligations; ungenerously saying to myself, thus far but no further? Shall we find it too much to bear some small penance which we deem hard or unjust, for instance, to be more punctual and exact in our daily observances and duties, to bear a little slight or contempt or want of consideration, to suffer the pinch of poverty, to reconcile myself to being in a neighbourhood which I do not like, or to continue to fill some lowly office? All these may be crosses, I admit, but what are they when compared with the Cross of my Jesus? And if for our sakes He gladly carries the Cross laid on Him, what cowardice and ingratitude is it not in us to shake off or try to shirk that which is ours.

Third Point.—The Crucifixion. At the bidding of His executioners, our Lord meekly laid Himself down on His altar of sacrifice. From the first moment of His Life He had been looking forward to this, and His Heart had been yearning to perfect our redemption; and now, with the tenderest affection, in the overflowing fulness of His love, with the utmost readiness of will, He offers Himself as a ready Victim to His Father's infinite justice, and, gently as a lamb, submits to His unfeeling executioners, who nail Him by His hands and feet. Oh, how unbearable that agony, what inconceivable torture! And yet the nails which we have driven into that sacred flesh are harder far to bear. Then the executioners raised Jesus upward above the earth upon His Cross, and, as He hangs there, let us contemplate Him with a grief that has no words to express it. But his relentless persecutors are not even yet satisfied; they continue to execrate Him, they scoff at and insult Him afresh, revelling in the sight of His countless torments. Oh, how terrible is this world; how fearful the hardness of man's heart when

under the influence of his unrestrained passions! Is it possible then we can bring ourselves to love this world, though in nothing changed from what it was? We can still cringe before it, nay, we can actually seek its notice and its esteem and all the time delude ourselves that we are true followers of Jesus Christ! Such sentiments and actions are as inexplicable as was the mercilessness of those who crucified our Blessed Lord.

Oh, let us pray with all our hearts that henceforth we may be crucified to the world and the world may be crucified to us, that we may love nothing now but Jesus, and Him crucified, that henceforth we may glory in nothing but in Jesus, and in Him crucified. *Fiat, fiat.*

Conclude with three colloquies, and with such acts and affections as the Holy Ghost may suggest to us. "Our Father."

JESUS EXPIRES ON THE CROSS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord suffers for three hours on the Cross, His enemies all the while triumphing and insulting Him. He utters His seven last words, and then expires.

Prelude 2.—Let us place ourselves reverently beneath the Cross, listen to His last words and watch with Him.

Prelude 3.—Pray that living with our Lord a crucified life, with Him we may persevere to the end, and die upon the Cross.

First Point.—Let us contemplate our Lord as He hangs there in the midst of suffering. Truly, He is by excellence the Man of Sorrows, for He suffers not one pain alone, but every variety of racking pains, together with the most bitter, heart-breaking sorrow. His Head

[1] "And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there; and the robbers, one on the right hand, the other on the left." (St. Luke xxiii. 33.)

is pierced with sharp thorns, and He has nothing on which to rest it, yet cannot move it without increasing the torture which they inflict. His hands are pierced and fastened, yet the weight of His Body is constantly dragging the holes wider. His feet, also, are secured to the wood, while His Body is mangled by His cruel scourging, and emaciated by hunger and loss of blood. His very bones might be numbered as He hangs shivering in the cold air. Truly there is no pain like unto His, nor a single spot that is free from wounds. The sight of this has nerved many a Saint to such acts of penance as have shortened their own lives. Let us have at least the magnanimity to bear our crosses with patience, be these repugnance to place or office, to Superiors or brethren, the trial of an uneasy and fretful temper, of bodily weakness, or lack of talent, &c. Above all, let us not try to shake the Cross off, or to avoid it. Let us stand by our true colours, as becomes soldiers and companions of Christ, and thereby will this slight token of our love and gratitude be a source of comfort to Him in His extremity.

Second Point.—The ignominies endured by our Lord on the Cross.[1] It is a great comfort if when we are in distress a friend comes to say a kind word to us and show us genuine sympathy. But there was none to do this to our Lord: the only sounds He heard were scoffs and ribaldry, and this from a vast multitude of all classes, gathered from all parts of the world, all blinded with passion, and looking upon Him as a seducer, a revolutionary agitator and sacrilegious blasphemer, for He said He was the Son of God, and also King of the Jews; and often loud shouts of exultation were raised as they marked the symptoms of approaching death.

[1] "And they that passed by, blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying: Vah, Thou that destroyest the Temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save Thyself, coming down from the Cross. In like manner also the chief priests mocking said with the Scribes: He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel come down now from the Cross, that we may see and believe." (St. Mark xv. 29—32.)

Let us learn a lesson of meekness and patience from our gentle Lord and Master. Let our thoughts dwell upon the particular injuries and humiliations we most dread, and then fixing our eyes upon Jesus thus despised and vilified, we will compare our injuries and affronts with those which He, though worthy of all honour, most undeservedly endured through pure love for us, and will thus nerve ourselves to bear our own with much readiness and joy. Is it not, then, blindness and madness for us vile creatures, whose origin is from nothing, whose end is corruption and a handful of dust, whose merit is hell-fire for our manifold sins, and consequently who deserve universal contempt and abuse, is it not folly that we should resent any possible injury, rebuke, humiliation? Let us take this truth to heart, that it may produce in us those effects which it has produced on all the saints who have gone before us, and may enable us too to rejoice in the midst of most trying humiliations.

Third Point.—Three heroic acts of virtue practised on the Cross.[1] The first of these was an heroic act of

[1] "And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And the people stood beholding, and the rulers with them derided Him, saying: He saved others, let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the Elect of God. . . . And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. . . . And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." (St. Luke xxiii. 34—43.) "Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own. Afterwards, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. . . . And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth. Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated." (St. John xix. 25—30.) "And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46.) "And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit, and saying this, He gave up the ghost." (St. Luke xxiii. 46.)

charity towards those who crucified Him. He especially prayed His Heavenly Father to forgive them, alleging their ignorance as an excuse. He forgets His own tortures in the keenness of His deep concern and anxiety for the spiritual well-being of those who were ridiculing and blaspheming Him and actually draining His life's blood from Him; and how ardently and fervorously He poured forth His whole Soul in His prayer is evident from the fact that no sooner did He hear the penitent thief, who at first had blasphemed Him, now invoking Him in the fulness of his faith and contrition, "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom," than with infinite mercy He granted him full remission of all his sins, and solemnly declared to him, "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

After this let no one, how grievous and numerous even may be his sins, lose confidence in the goodness of our dear Lord; for is it not most certain that even though our poor souls are as burdened with guilt as were those of His executioners, if only with humble and contrite hearts we have recourse to Him and implore His mercy, through the merits of His Passion and Death, we shall obtain forgiveness. Why then should we despond when we have to deal with so benign and merciful a Master?

The second most significant and heroic act of our Lord upon the Cross was when, in view of the Divine scheme for the sanctification of man, He extended to His beloved Apostle that mutual relationship which had been hitherto kept sacred between Himself and His Blessed Mother. These had been the nearest and the most faithful to Him throughout His life, His public ministry, and the course of His Passion, and both at that moment were bearing witness to Him beneath the Cross, and sharing in all the sufferings and ignominy of His death. In testimony of His love and gratitude, He now addresses His Virgin Mother under the title of "The Woman," foretold in ancient prophecy, and solemnly constitutes a new and spiritual relationship between her and His

virgin Apostle, St. John, saying to her: "Woman, behold thy son." Then turning, as we are told, to the thrice favoured Apostle, He bestows upon him the sublime dignity and responsibility of being associated with Himself as Mary's child, saying to him: "Behold thy Mother." But further, if we are to believe the teaching of the Fathers, in declaring Mary to be in a very true and especial sense as a Mother to St. John, Jesus at the same time made her the spiritual Mother of all the faithful, whom He thus consigned to her maternal love, protection, and intercession, so that the Church, in regard of her services at the foot of the Cross, styles her Mother of Mercy, to all the adopted brethren of her Divine Son. Hence our Lord's words to St. John are to be taken as a clear intimation to us through him that Jesus has called us to the singular privilege, and laid upon us the loving obligation of offering up to her the truest reverence, devotion, and confidence of sons, making her the sole mistress and absolute disposer of ourselves and of everything belonging to us. For our part, being constituted members of the same family with Jesus, and having the same Father and Mother as He, let us assume the features and character of that Holy Family, sharing in its heroic love and courage right up to the Cross itself.

The most heroic sacrifice which our Blessed Lord offered upon the Cross in His Sacred Humanity may be called the Passion of the Beatific Vision. We know that during the agony of suffering which He then passed through, He refused to His inferior nature all the strength and light which the direct vision of God would have imparted to it, and this He did that He might endure the torture of interior desolation. It was the mounting up of that agony to its greatest height that wrung from His Heart and lips the exceeding bitter cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?" Those words mean no accusation against the goodness and mercifulness of His Heavenly Father, no impatient expostulation with Him, no lack of confidence in Him, no indirect

prayer for even the mitigation of the bitterest of all pangs, that feeling of utter isolation from the presence or forgiveness of God which the accumulated weight of the sins He had taken upon Himself rendered so inevitable. He neither laments nor complains, but it seems as though He mingled His entire resignation as Man to His Heavenly Father's Will with a certain alarmed wonder that the vengeance He had incurred for man's sake could be so relentless and unsparing as to require that the Most Holy Son of God should be driven to so great an extremity of anguish and desolation. The cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me," indicates that the highest point of our Lord's Oblation of Himself has been reached. His sacrifice is now fully consummated, and it has been as fully accepted, for the tone of His last word is changed, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." His cry of anguish was uttered more for our sakes than His own; it has brought peace to our souls, and merited for us comfort and relief in the hour of our death.

THE DEATH OF OUR LORD.[1]

NOTE.—The Passion and Death of our Lord has been a favourite subject of contemplation to the saints in every age. It has supported the martyrs amid their cruel tortures; it has encouraged confessors in the sacrifices, labours, trials, and persecutions to which their zeal prompted or exposed them; it has enabled virgins to bear the hardships of a life devoted to solitude, penance, and prayer; it has beguiled the long lonely hours of the solitaries of the desert; it was the "Master" of St. Thomas Aquinas; it was the "one book" of St. Francis; it was the glory of St. Paul; it was as a "magnificent spectacle" to the sympathetic soul of St. Augustine.

[1] "And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, gave up the ghost." (St. Matt. xxvii. 50.)

Prelude 1.—Let us in spirit take our stand beside our Lord as He hangs in death upon the Cross.

Prelude 2.—Join in earnestly begging of Him whose Sacred Body is ever united with His Divinity, to enlighten us on the many lessons which the Cross should teach us, that we may have a practical devotion to it in life and death.

First Point.—The Cross presents Jesus before us as our Victim in the truest sense. It discloses to us the fearful malice of sin; for through it, although we are under infinite obligations to God by reason of all His benefits bestowed upon us in the natural order, both as to body and soul, and the countless graces in the supernatural order, which are far more numerous and more excellent than all the gifts of nature, yet we have incurred the guilt of innumerable offences against His infinite majesty, justice, and sanctity. Our crime therefore is one of infinite malice if we consider it ethically. Hence it follows that to propitiate the anger of God, or to satisfy the demands of His justice, an Infinite Victim was necessary, one whose dignity would be proportionate to the malice of the crime. Not all mankind together could suffice to pay the debt incurred by one single sin; for, after all, no combination of finite victims could produce an infinite atonement, such as the offended majesty and justice of God demanded. It was for this reason that the Eternal Son of God assumed our human nature, and in that nature would bear our iniquities, and by His Passion and Death would repair the outrages of which we were guilty. He became the sin-offering for all mankind and for each individual member of the human race. It was for each one that this ruin of His most perfect and sacred Body was inflicted, and that His Soul was overwhelmed in an ocean of sorrow.

O my Jesus! it was for my sins that Thy hands and feet were pierced with nails; Thy sacred Head crowned with thorns; Thine eyes filled with the blood that oozed from the wounds in Thy Head and face; and Thy whole Body made one vast wound, through which Thy wearied

and agonized Soul took its last flight back to the God who gave it! What man can conceive the dreadful nature of sin, which demanded such a fearful atonement? Who will not tremble when he beholds so terrible a proof of the justice of God? "If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" If the blows of God's vengeance have been so many and bore so heavily on His well-beloved Son, though full of all grace, all life, all beauty, what will He do to those who by sin have forfeited these three divine gifts? If justice tempered by mercy strikes such fear, what must be the effect of that same justice when the hour of His mercy is past? "Holy and terrible is His Name: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."[1] Let us then pray with the Psalmist, "Pierce my flesh with Thy fear, for I am afraid of Thy judgments."[2] Let us in holy fear and confidence fly for protection and refuge to His opened side: "Within Thy sacred wounds hide me, O Lord."

Second Point.—The Cross teaches us the price paid for our souls. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold and silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers; but with the Precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled."[3] Thus writes St. Peter; and St. Paul affirms, "Ye are bought with a great price."[4] Not all the treasures of the universe could purchase a single soul; nor could the combined labours and sacrifices of men or angels succeed in saving that soul. For this an infinite price had to be paid, and not one could reach up to it except He who was Himself infinite. Therefore did the Son of God come down from Heaven, full of grace and truth, and assume our human nature, imparting to it an infinite price and dignity. "The Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us," and was made in all things like to us, except that He had no sin. "He was beautiful beyond the rest of the children of men," "beauty was

[1] Psalm cx. 9.
[2] Psalm cxviii. 120.
[3] 1 St. Peter i. 18.
[4] 1 Cor. vi. 20.

poured over His lips," "His feet were beautiful as He proceeded on His way preaching the Gospel of peace, bringing glad tidings of good things:" His mind was sublime and beautiful in the possession of all truth, and His Heart was beautiful, in which the noblest passions, like the strings of a lyre, were divinely attuned in perfect harmony: "His ways were beautiful, and all His paths were peace, mercy, and truth." And now let us contemplate Him as His lifeless Body hangs upon the Cross. What has become of all this beauty? "We have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him. Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity: His look was as it were hidden and despised: and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted." He has become a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people. Such is the price, this the sacrifice Jesus offered in order to pay the ransom for all the souls of men, and for each individual soul in particular; and well may the Spirit of God counsel us, "My son, have a care of thy soul and give it honour according to its desert."[1] Alas, how little care do we take of our poor souls! How recklessly we have exposed them to ruin! How often have we not bartered them for gold, for a fleeting, shameful pleasure, or for some empty gratification. O my Jesus! is it thus I show my gratitude in answer to all Thou hast done for me? Is it thus that I recognize the value of my soul, or of the price which Thou hast paid for my redemption? Grant, dear Lord, that I may learn at last the real value of my poor soul—grant that I may by union with Thee on the Cross fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for the salvation of my soul.

Third Point.—The Cross teaches me what it is to love. The heavens and the earth, and in fact the whole universe, proclaim the goodness and generosity of God, and thereby challenge my love of Him for all these proofs of His love for me. But how feebly do they tell me of

[1] Ecclus. x. 31.

His love when compared with the voice which comes to me from the dead Body of Jesus on the Cross. If the criterion of love is suffering, and if the measure of love is estimated by the amount of that suffering, then what must have been the reality and intensity of the love of Jesus for me. "He loved me, and delivered Himself for me."[1] He assumed human nature and concealed His Divine attributes under the form and habit of a servant for me—He lived an obscure, laborious, and poverty-stricken life for me; He would be persecuted and tormented through love for me; finally, He expired in an agony of love for me! Even this consummation did not satisfy the loving Heart of Jesus, but He would extend and store up the fruits of this His Sacrifice, "having loved His own He loves them unto the end," gathering all nations into His Kingdom, "for from the rising of the sun unto its going down, My Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered up a clean oblation."[2]

Truly our Jesus abounds in love for us upon the Cross; "He is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands,"[3] white as the spotless lily is His most pure Soul, white with the pallor of death is His Body, from which the last drops of blood have been drained; but yet He is all ruddy like one that has trodden the wine-press alone, sprinkled all over "with His most Precious Blood, which speaketh better things than that of Abel," proclaiming to us how much He has loved us. Now love demands a return of love; we are bound to be filled with love for our crucified Jesus. Yet we find it easier to love any one else rather than Jesus! We can make sacrifices, can labour and suffer pain for others; but how little is the labour, how poor the sacrifice we have hitherto offered up through love for our true Love who is crucified! Shame to us that we can look upon Him whom love has crucified for us, "the firstborn from the dead," and yet hesitate to embrace that Cross which is His badge of love. Would that we had the

[1] Galat. ii. 20. [2] Malach. i. 11. [3] Cant. v. 10.

spirit of him who gloried in nothing but in Christ crucified; who could think of nothing, love nothing, but in Christ and Him crucified! Oh, for the feelings of him who long yearned for, and ardently loved, the cross upon which at length he breathed his last in testimony of his love of his Jesus crucified. Let us pour out our whole soul in ardent prayer to our Blessed Lord on His Cross, that we also may be fastened with Him to the Cross: in the annihilation of all self-love, in sacrificing all worldly pleasures and enjoyments, dying to our own will and judgment, detached from all the passing things of earth, and joined in closest union with Jesus crucified.

End with a triple colloquy: to our Blessed Lady, as the Mother of Him who was crucified; to our Lord Himself dying upon the Cross; and to the Eternal Father who received from that same Cross the Human Soul of His Divine Son. Conclude with the "Our Father."

THE BURIAL OF OUR LORD.[1]

Prelude 1.—Let us call to mind how, after our Lord was dead, Joseph and Nicodemus took down His Sacred Body from the Cross in the presence of His sorrowful Mother, and, after anointing it, laid it reverently in the sepulchre.

Prelude 2.—Let us follow their actions with devout attention.

Prelude 3.—Beg earnestly the grace to know our dear Lord who lies there dead through love for us, that

1 "And when evening was come, Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the Body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that He should be already dead. And sending for the Centurion, he asked him if He were already dead. And when he had understood it by the Centurion, he gave the Body to Joseph. And Joseph, buying fine linen, and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen, and laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewed out of a rock." (St. Mark xv. 42—46.)

whether in life or death we may return His love and remain for ever faithful to Him.

First Point.—We will now contemplate the Sacred Body of our Blessed Lord. His hands and feet are marked with the holes made by the cruel nails, His sacred forehead is punctured by the crown of thorns, His whole Body is disfigured by the countless strokes of the scourging, and His blessed side is opened wide, laying bare His Sacred Heart. We look in vain for a single spot without wound or disfigurement. How literally has every prophecy in His regard been fulfilled. Truly they have dug His hands and feet, they have numbered all His bones. There is no beauty nor comeliness in Him.[1] And yet if we dwell on that sight with the eyes of faith, we see His beauty more radiant than ever. He was beautiful as He lay in the manger as a babe, beautiful as He sat in the midst of the doctors hearing them and asking them questions; His hands were beautiful, ever open and scattering blessings, His feet were beautiful as He went about doing good, evangelizing peace, evangelizing good things; His speech was beautiful, and "grace was poured abroad in His lips,"[2] and His words were so eloquent that in listening to Him men forgot their most urgent needs. Although His hands had lost their power, and His eyes were closed to the light, and He had become incapable of utterance or of motion, He had never been so beautiful as He was in death. His wounds are so many eloquent voices bearing testimony to His beautiful courage, His glorious devotedness and love. *Ecce quomodo amavi te*—behold, how much I have loved thee. He lies like a warrior after a hard won victory taking His rest, yet only for a short while. His labours are over, but His glory is about to begin and shall never know an end.

[1] "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness; and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him. Despised and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; His look as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not." (Isaias liii. 2, 3.)

[2] "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad in Thy lips; therefore hath God blessed Thee for ever." (Psalm xliv. 3.)

Through the opening in His blessed side, let us gaze on the mingled blood and water which trickles from the wound made by the soldier's spear. Oh, the poor Heart of our dear Jesus! That Heart which was weighed down by sorrow, which palpitated in the strength of its emotions, was sickened with loathing, and yet always brave and undaunted, because inflamed with love for each one of us. Oh, the big and generous Heart of Jesus! vast as the outstretching expanse on the sea-shore. It has at last ceased to beat, and has grown cold. But its life and action will soon return, and will appeal to each one of us to enter into its joy and share its love.

O dear Lord, fill us with admiration of Thy beauty in death, let us know nothing but Thee, and Thee crucified![1] let us henceforth glory but in Thee, and in Thee crucified. Let us also learn how to weigh the world and its judgments, bearing ever in mind how cruel and heartless it was to Thee! with what disdain and base ingratitude it treated Thee, and how false and perverted was its estimate of Thee! But, alas! though ages have passed since then, its estimations and judgments still remain. Grant us then the grace to die with Thee to the world, that we may live to Thee, and to be crucified to the world, that we may become men to whom the world is crucified.

Second Point.—Let us contemplate the wound in His Sacred Heart. The spear opened the Heart of Jesus without inflicting pain, for this was beyond its reach; but it was not so with that of our Blessed Lady, in whom the words of holy Simeon were verified, "And thy own soul a sword (of sorrow) shall pierce."

"And there came forth blood and water." Here is the consummation of love on the part of our dear Lord. The virtue and efficacy of that blood and water are applied to His mystical spouse the Church, and to each of us her children, being the symbols of the Blessed Sacrament and of holy

[1] "For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (1 Cor. ii. 2.)

Baptism.[1] Well does St. John say that the side of our Lord was "opened," for he would teach us that this door of true life, from which come forth the life-giving sacraments of the Church, stands always wide open. The Sacred Heart is the never-failing fountain of grace, in which I shall find all the treasures of Divine wisdom and knowledge, of piety and innocence, of humility and meekness, of goodness and mercy; this blessed Heart is a very ocean of mercy. Jesus Himself has said it: "If sinners will come to My Heart, they shall find it an ocean of mercy." Peter and Thomas and Magdalene found it so. Then courage, my soul! I too shall find it so. The Heart of Jesus is a sure refuge in every danger, wherein I can dwell securely, protected from the fiercest storms of temptation. The Heart of Jesus is the school of true sanctity, in which the bitterness of trials and the practice of virtue is sweetened; it is the paradise of our souls. Oh, how good and pleasant it is to dwell in the Sacred Heart! in this temple of peace and love—this holy of holies—this ark of the New Testament. Let us resolve to take up our abode in it, for surely we shall there find all good things, and shall be protected from all those evils which the enemy of our human nature, the false and treacherous world, and our inconstant and depraved nature, are always plotting against us.

Third Point.—The Burial of our Lord.[2] With what reverence and love Joseph and Nicodemus carry the Body of our Lord to the sepulchre, followed by His sorrowing Mother, and by His Beloved Disciple and

[1] "Ex costa Adæ Heva ædificata est; ex corde autem Jesu, in Spiritu Sancto concepta et nata Ecclesia . . . et de suo latere Christus aquam nobis dedit et sanguinem unde repararetur Ecclesia." (Chrysostom, in Ephes. v.)

[2] "They took therefore the Body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, where no man had yet been laid. There therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand." (St. John xix. 40—42.)

Mary Magdalene, shedding bitter tears, the one of love, the other of penance. How great a contrast with the last obsequies of the proud ones of the world! The remains of the King of kings, the great Deliverer of mankind, the Head of the elect, are accompanied to the grave by three humble men and a handful of pious women, whereas the children of this world are borne to their last resting-place by crowds of friends and admirers, with all the signs of pomp and pageantry.

Eja mater fons amoris, me sentire vim doloris fac, ut tecum lugeam. They place Jesus in a new sepulchre, in which no one had been buried. Alas! how rarely can it be said of us when we receive His Sacred Body, that we place Him in our hearts, in which nothing else has been laid. If through the loving providence and infinite mercy of God they are free from all mortal and venial sins, yet are there not some faults, offences, abuses of grace, or some inordinate affections still lingering in our hearts, which render them a less worthy place for Him to dwell in? Let us resolve henceforth to banish from them everything which may be less pleasing to Him, and to love nothing but in Him, for Him, and with Him. Let us determine to die to the world that we may live more perfectly to Him who is our true life.

End with the "Our Father."

THE RULES OF TEMPERANCE.

1. St. Ignatius in the third part of the Exercises gives us a document containing eight rules for the regulation of our conduct in regard to our food, which are called the Rules of Temperance.

2. Although the Saint places these at the end of the third part of the Exercises, there is nothing to prevent their being given to an exercitant even at the commencement; nay, there are sometimes reasons for doing this

first. The observance of these rules may be necessary for the fulfilment of the duty of prayer; or, secondly, it may be that during the time of retreat a person is better able to determine the amount of nourishment which he requires, and to regulate and accustom himself to it for the future; and, thirdly, if for any reason the exercitant cannot perform any other corporal penance, he may by the observance of these rules, obtain corresponding merit through the practice of that self-denial and self-conquest which they involve.

3. For the better understanding of these rules we must observe that there are two sources of temptation, one in *ourselves* which is our natural appetite and inclination; the other *exterior* to us and arising from the devil, who, as the enemy of human nature, studies our natural inclinations, and turns them to account for his greater skill in tempting us. We must then with care distinguish between our reason and will which is the superior part, and the inferior part in which are found those appetites and imaginations that are a constant snare to us. The only way of repressing these capricious and wayward inclinations is to resist their influence at once, and thus keep ourselves always under control.

4. Again, in order to avert the hurtful effects of our appetites and imagination, we should acquire a habit of foreseeing the occasions in which they may be called into activity, and of determining our line of conduct accordingly. We should afterwards examine ourselves how far we have been faithful to our previous determinations; hence we must be diligent in the practice of our Particular Examen.

These principles are embodied and illustrated in the following rules regarding our food, but, as we see, they are applicable to any other natural inclination.

Rule 1.—The observance of temperance in the amount of bread we eat is not so necessary, as there is not much danger of excess in this respect.

Rule 2.—As regards drink we ought to be more abstemious, and should consider well what is good and

useful for us to take, and deny ourselves whatever is injurious to us.

Rule 3.—With regard to rich and delicate dishes, we should observe more careful abstinence, for in the use of these our taste and appetite are more likely to lead to over-indulgence.

Rule 4.—Having due regard to our health, the more we abstain from what is *amply* sufficient nourishment, the sooner shall we acquire the right medium in food and drink, and this for two reasons: first, because in thus rightly guiding and keeping ourselves under control, we shall often experience interior suggestions and Divine inspirations whereby the proper medium will be made clear to us. Secondly, because if in abstaining and retrenching we see that either our strength or aptitude for the Exercises begins to fail us, we shall come to judge more readily and safely what support we do actually require.

Rule 5.—During meals let us consider how our Lord would eat and drink, speak and comport Himself, and strive to imitate Him, thereby keeping our mind occupied more in this and less on the nourishment of our body. Thus we shall acquire a proper method of behaviour and self-restraint.

Rule 6.—Our attention will be less absorbed in our food, if during meals we occupy our minds with the lives of the saints or some other pious reflections, or think of any spiritual work which we have to do.

Rule 7.—Above all things let us avoid pampering the appetite or yielding to greediness, but rather retain mastery over ourselves both as to our manner of eating and the quantity of food we take.

Rule 8.—In order to prevent any excess, it is of great advantage to determine beforehand, when we are not hungry, what and how much we will take at our next meal, and on no account to exceed it when the time comes, no matter what may be our inclination to eat or the strength of the temptation to do so. On the contrary, if we make any change, let it be to diminish the quantity,

and thus conquer our appetite and defeat the temptation of the devil.

It is easy to see how these rules may be applied to other *natural* inclinations, such as irritability, pride, vanity, uncharitableness, sensuality, and the like.

From these rules, we see how admirably and simply St. Ignatius leads us on to the habit of self-conquest in even the most ordinary actions of life, and in this way teaches us to supernaturalize the most natural duties.

THREE METHODS OF PRAYER.

One of the most profitable instructions given us by St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises is that upon the "Three Methods of Prayer," as explained in the *Directorium*.[1]

That he attached great importance to these methods is clear from his requiring that those who give retreats should always explain them to exercitants.[2] Again, we read how St. Francis Xavier not only made use of them himself, but recommended them to his penitents, and sometimes enjoined them as a penance, to the great advantage of their souls.

There is no doubt that if we practise them we shall find them exceedingly useful, and a great aid to contemplation and to recollection.

FIRST METHOD.

The *first* method of prayer has for its subject-matter the Ten Commandments, the seven capital sins, the three powers of the soul, the five senses of the body, and any rules or virtues peculiar to our state. It is wonderfully beneficial in aiding us to acquire a knowledge

[1] C. xxxvii. [2] *Instit.* p. vii. c. 4.

of ourselves, and to discover our faults, failings, and negligences.

The *manner* of performing it is as follows:

1. In the first place, before commencing, we must collect our thoughts and place ourselves in the presence of God, reflecting on the serious duty we are going to perform and on the object we have in view. This is common to every form of prayer, and is urged upon us by the Spirit of God: "Before prayer prepare thy soul, and be not as one that tempteth God."[1]

2. We must make our preparatory prayer, in which we beg humbly of God our Lord that He will grant us grace to know what faults or failings we have been guilty of in that which is the special subject-matter on which we intend to examine ourselves, and also that He will further give us His grace and assistance to amend them in the future, for the greater glory and praise of His Divine Majesty and for the greater purification of our souls.

3. We then examine ourselves for the space of two or three minutes on some particular commandment, to see how we have observed it or in what we have failed in regard of it: we make an act of sorrow for the faults we discover, humbly ask pardon of God, and say the "Our Father;" following the same method in respect of each of the commandments.

If, however, by God's grace we find that we have nothing to accuse ourselves of as regards that commandment, we give thanks to God for having preserved us from falling, and pass on to another. Those who by God's mercy are aiming at perfection and consequently avoid grievous violation of the law of God, may examine themselves on their faults and negligences in the observance of those virtues which are enjoined in the Decalogue; taking, for example, faith, hope, and charity, prayer and the qualities which are requisite to render it acceptable, such as humility, confidence, fidelity, and perseverance, and the like. We have to observe a similar method in

[1] Ecclus. xviii. 23.

the employment of the faculties of our soul, or the use and abuses of our senses, or in the fulfilment of the particular duties of our state of life.

It is well, also, to introduce other considerations into this method of prayer and self-examination, and amongst them, how profitable, reasonable, and necessary it is to observe this command of God, how prejudicial and unreasonable to transgress it.

If the exercise regards the "Three Powers of the Soul,"[1]

[1] St. Ignatius observes: "With regard to the Three Powers of the Soul, let the same method or rule be observed as in the Commandments, making the Addition, preparatory prayer, and colloquy."

The first of these powers of the soul is the Memory, which owing to our corrupt nature is prone to recall and dwell upon such things as flatter the senses or our own self-love, and are too often liable to be dangerous or sinful. Sometimes these memories spring from our own will or from habit, at other times they may be suggested by the good spirit or by the devil, as we have already seen.

We may sin through our Memory by recalling thoughts or acts of sensuality or impurity, of uncharitableness, of disobedience, &c.; by occupying our minds with vain, worldly, or dangerous thoughts; by entertaining profane and distracting suggestions which present themselves to us when at prayer, in church, &c. On the other hand, we gain merit from the right use of the memory by rejecting all recollections which may incline us to sin; by repelling imaginations or the images of profane subjects, especially in time of prayer; by cutting off all idle fancies and unprofitable remembrances; lastly, by habitually realizing the presence of God, or of holy objects.

As regards the second power, namely, the Intellect. We sin if through our own fault we remain in ignorance of those things which are necessary for salvation, or of the obligations of our state or position: or if we form rash opinions of others; or if we are fickle and inconstant in our judgment, or lightly abandon good resolutions which we have made: or if we are obstinate in our opinions. We also fail in the right use of this faculty, by dissimulation, by an insincere mode of action, by scheming, craft, or curious inquiry into matters which we neither ought nor can thoroughly understand, the mysteries, for instance, of faith; or by defending our views with vehemence, often with self-sufficiency and contempt for the opinion of others, whereas a man of good judgment rarely has much confidence in himself. The one and only remedy against all these sins or faults is the true knowledge and due appreciation of our worthlessness.

With regard to the faculty of the Will, it may be said to consist of two parts: one superior, which in all things is conformable to and in harmony with the Divine will; the other or inferior faculty inclines us to those things which are unworthy of us, and which we must resist, as they would prompt us to gratify "the law in our members which fights against the law of our minds, and would enslave us to the law of sin."

or the five "Senses,"[1] we may reflect on the great gift God has bestowed on us in giving us this power or sense, for what end He has conferred it on us, and how our

[1] With regard to the five senses of the body, St. Ignatius says: "The same order is to be observed, the subject-matter only being changed." In the exposition of the "Foundation" of the Spiritual Exercises, we saw that all sin springs from the wrong use of creatures, through the medium of the senses. From this we learn the vital importance of keeping these under due control; and hence the value of Rules of Modesty, such as are laid down by St. Ignatius, as well as by all the other founders of Religious Orders.

Of the senses in their due order come, 1. the *Eyes*, through which death commonly enters (Jerem. ix. 21), as we see in Eve, David, &c. Let us beware of fixing our eyes on any dangerous object. From neglect in this respect we expose ourselves to countless phantasms, imaginations, and perturbations. Let us also avoid letting our eyes wander thoughtlessly at random; and particularly let us beware of indiscriminate reading.

2. *Ears*.—How much ruin has sprung from listening to loose, uncharitable, or idle conversation. "Be not led astray," says St. Paul, "evil conversation corrupteth good manners." (1 Cor. xviii. 33.) It is an axiom, "Tell me with whom you entertain yourself, and I will tell you who you are." Follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit, and "hedge in your ears with thorns."

3. *Smell*.—All faults of this sense arise from voluptuousness and effeminacy, which are an abomination. That indulgence of this sense may amount to grievous sin is clear from the punishment which God inflicts upon it. (Isaias xxxiv. 3.)

4. *Tongue*.—St. James (Epist. iii.) tells us that he who offends not in word is a peaceful man. It is indeed a little member, but it is a fire, a world of iniquity; the tongue no man can tame—it is a restless evil—full of deadly poison—from it proceed blessings and cursings. The faults committed through it are without number: they are falsehood, detraction, calumny, uncharitableness, blasphemy, cursing, perjury, evil counsels, scurrility, boasting, vainglory, scoffing, murmuring, and profanity.

To avoid these or other sins of the tongue let us follow the counsels of Ecclus. (xxxviii. 28): "Hedge in thine ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue, and make doors and bars to thy mouth: make a balance for thy words, and a just bridle for thy mouth; and take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue;" and again, those of St. James (i. 19): "Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak," for "in the multitude of words there shall not want sin; but he that refraineth his lips is most wise." (Prov. x. 19.)

5. *Touch*.—Any undue care of the body, such as having recourse to the countless means provided by the luxury of modern civilization for promoting its comfort and warding off pain—all overcare in guarding against cold or protecting it from the heat—the use of things calculated to enervate us or to render us effeminate; for all these induce occasions of sin, and are unworthy of one who undertakes to follow Christ our Lord.

Blessed Lord and the saints employed it. Let us then examine what use we have made of it, offer up an act of sorrow, say the "Our Father" as above, and resolve to employ it better in future. We little know how much this method of prayer conduces to reform our life and restore fervour; for it is too true that very many daily faults are committed in the use of our faculties and senses of which we are ignorant through want of reflection.

At the end of this exercise we should make our colloquy according to the subject-matter, and end with an "Our Father."

Of course this method of prayer should not be undertaken without the approbation of the confessor, by any who are of a nervous and scrupulous disposition, or who are troubled by temptations of mistrust and want of confidence in the mercy of God.

SECOND METHOD.

After recollecting ourselves and placing ourselves in the presence of God, before considering the exercise upon which we are about to enter, we offer up our preparatory prayer as usual, begging that all our intentions, thoughts, actions, and endeavours may be directed purely to the praise, honour, and glory of God our Lord and to the sanctification of our souls. We then take some vocal prayer, as the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," or else a psalm, or prayer of the Church, and repeat it, dwelling upon any word or phrase, making reflections thereon, as to its meaning, its application, the dogmatic or moral truths it contains, the obligations it involves, &c. Then should follow such affections and colloquies as are suitable to the matter on which we are reflecting. When the time is past, if we have not finished the whole prayer, St. Ignatius would have us complete it without pausing, and conclude with a colloquy to the person to whom the prayer is addressed.

This method of prayer is very easy, and can be

practised by all sorts of persons, in any circumstances of time and place, whether we be sick or well, at home or on a journey; moreover, it is extremely profitable, as it accustoms us to recollection and union with God by means of ejaculations during the course of the day, and at our daily duties in which we are liable to dissipation. When on a journey, or indisposed, or suffering from aridity and desolation of spirit, or when harassed by distracting cares, let us have recourse to this method of prayer nor allow ourselves to abbreviate the time which is assigned to it.

It is also of great advantage to those who have to recite the Divine Office, or offer the Holy Sacrifice, that they should apply this method of prayer to the psalms, or the various prayers of the Canon of the Mass from time to time, as it will promote piety, recollection, and devotion in the performance of these holy Offices of the Church. In like manner, for those who have a habit of reciting certain fixed daily prayers, it will prove of great benefit to make use of this second method of prayer occasionally, as a means of increasing attention and devotion.

I would observe also that just as sick persons, who have no appetite and feel a nausea for food, but must take some nourishment, should be induced to take small quantities at very short intervals, so there are certain people of flighty, nervous, and unstable dispositions, who cannot without great difficulty collect their thoughts and fix their minds and imaginations, but must by this method be gradually led on until they can make full use of the different powers of their souls in regular mental prayer.

THIRD METHOD.

In this method of prayer, after the immediate preparation and the usual preparatory petition, we select some prayer, as the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," some psalm, or other prayer of the Church, and repeat it so slowly, and with such pauses, that we take a breath

between one word and another, or between one phrase and another; in the meantime, fixing our minds successively on the signification and meaning of the words which we pronounce, or on the person to whom the prayer is addressed, considering his excellency, holiness, and glory, and our own baseness, vileness, and shame, paying reverence to him with pious affection of heart, and begging him to grant or obtain for us the favour which we desire.

It is not to be understood that we are to employ this method while we are reciting the Office, or the Rosary, or other such long prayers, because it would take up too much time; but it is very profitable to use it now and then, especially at certain short intervals, as for instance whilst going up and down stairs, or from one duty to another, when visiting the Blessed Sacrament, or when we have more leisure time. On account of our manifold occupations and duties we cannot spend so much time in reciting the Office and other spiritual exercises as those do who live a contemplative life, or whose duties are fewer and less varied, but still on certain occasions we can pause to weigh the meaning of what we say, and thus increase our fervour and devotion.

THE FOURTH WEEK.

INTRODUCTION.

1. The end of this part of the Exercises is to excite us to rejoice at and share in the great joy of our Lord,[1] to confirm our hope,[2] and thereby expand our hearts, strengthen our weakness, and fill us with comfort and courage.[3] In this fourth part we ought also to confirm ourselves in the third degree of humility by a new motive, namely, the consideration of the victory which is proposed to us and the grand reward which is promised to us. We may also with fruit consider how the four properties of a glorified body contrast with the four objects of desire enumerated in the "Foundation."

2. As the purpose of these contemplations of the Resurrection and of the different Apparitions is to unite the soul more intimately with God, some have complained that St. Ignatius, instead of treating each subject more fully, so as to attain this end through that bond of holy love which is the crown and fulness of sanctity and perfection, selects merely the two contemplations of the Resurrection and of Divine Love. To this objection Father Suarez[4] replies that in the Unitive Way, which is so much commended by the saints, we have to dis-

[1] *Direct.* xxxvi.

[2] "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy hath regenerated us into a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 St. Peter i. 3.)

[3] "But having the same recompense (I speak as to my children) be you also enlarged." (2 Cor. vi. 13.)

[4] *De Relig.* lib. ix. c. vi. nn. 9, 10.

tinguish two things: first, its beginning; second, its end and perfection. As to the beginning and entrance into this way which leads to a perfect union with God, and which is capable of being reduced to a certain order and method, it is sufficiently notified by St. Ignatius. In order to put us on the way, and he intends nothing more, he points out to us the matter and form which we are to adopt in our contemplation; whereas, the end or perfection, which consists in the possession of God by the soul through contemplation,[1] is a point so sublime and super-

[1] In this higher kind of contemplation, wherein, antecedent to any operations of the mind, God acts directly and immediately upon the soul, which in its turn voluntarily assents in a spirit of love, Father Alvarez de Paz distinguishes fifteen degrees of union between the soul and God. The *first* degree he calls, "Intuition of truth," in which the mind apprehends vividly and without any mental process the perfections of God, the mysteries of our Lord's Life, the hollowness of earthly things, or some particular truth in the sacred writings, &c. This vivid intuition is attended by great self-abasement and ardent love of God.

The *second* degree is that in which God seems to take sudden and entire possession of the powers of the soul, which at once responds by acts of praise and love.

The *third* degree, namely, that of "Spiritual silence," is attained when the contemplative soul is so filled with admiration as to be unable to do more than admire, and the heart is so full that it cannot express its desires.

The *fourth* degree is that of "Quiet" or repose, when the soul simply reposes in the intimate presence of God, who regards it with intense love, although it feels itself most unworthy of His love.

The *fifth* degree is "Union," in which the soul apprehends so clearly the infinite perfections of God, that it feels nothing can separate it from Him, and the will is so inflamed with the love of Him that it cannot live without Him.

In the *sixth* degree God speaks audibly to the soul, as He did sometimes to the prophets, or as Christ to St. Ignatius, or as our Lady to St. Stanislaus.

The *seventh* degree is "Spiritual sleep or somnolence," in which the soul is as it were totally unconscious of external things and is in no way affected by them, being so to speak inebriated with the wine of God's love and charity.

The *eighth* degree, which is closely connected with this, is a more intense state of abstraction from all external things and more perfect union with God.

The *ninth* degree is that of "Rapture," when the soul is at it were forcibly alienated from the body itself as well as from external things, and is absorbed in the contemplation of God and in the love of Him, so

natural that it cannot be learned by rule or method, but depends entirely on the grace and illumination of the "Holy Ghost, who breatheth where He will."[1]

3. Besides kindling in us an ardent desire to love God, St. Ignatius wishes to instil into our souls a complete detachment from, and a profound contempt for, all earthly things; and whereas this should be manifested more in our actions than in our words and feelings, we must during this part of the Exercises conceive and

that it desires nothing but Him, wishes for nothing but to do and to suffer for Him, whilst at the same time it is overwhelmed with the consciousness of its own misery and unworthiness. In those times the body and the senses often seem to be dead, or sometimes the body is raised in the air, &c.

The *tenth* degree is when God or Christ our Lord or the saints appear in human form to him who contemplates. Such sensible communications are of a lower character than those we have alluded to, appealing as they do to the soul through the medium of the senses; they are also liable to mislead us, as they may be merely the productions of imagination, or the work of the devil transforming himself into an angel of light. They are, therefore, neither to be sought for nor to be in any way encouraged.

Not much unlike the preceding, are the purely imaginary apparitions mentioned in the *eleventh* degree, which suddenly present themselves to the soul engaged in contemplation, and powerfully affect it by drawing it to God and to that which is good.

The *twelfth* degree is styled "Intellectual vision." This occurs when Divine or heavenly truths are clearly and directly manifested to the intellect that is occupied in contemplation. Of course this is of a far higher, more spiritual character than apparitions which appeal to the senses, or to the imagination. It is sometimes preceded or followed by sensible or imaginary representations, which, as we have said, may come from the good angel or from the devil disguised as an angel of light.

The *thirteenth* degree is the "Vision of God in an undefined and obscure manner;" like an object that is indistinctly perceived in the morning mist or in the early break of day.

The *fourteenth* degree or "The admirable manifestation of God," is when God manifests His presence, not as it were face to face, as the blessed see Him in Heaven, but clearly as an object is seen in the transparent daylight, and not indeed in sensible form but as spirit appears to spirit. St. Ignatius was favoured by God with frequent experience of all these degrees, and in an especial manner by that last named.

The *fifteenth* degree is the Beatific Vision, such as the blessed enjoy in Heaven, who see God not through a glass, in a dark manner, but face to face, not as now in part, but known even as they are known. (Alvarez de Paz, *De perfectione vitæ.*)

[1] St. John iii. 8.

form strong resolutions to practise heroic virtues, especially entire resignation and conformity of our will to the will of God, towards which end St. Ignatius directs the whole Exercises.[1]

4. As to the manner of meditating in this part, it is quite the same as is laid down in the meditations on the Life of Christ in the preceding parts, considering in each mystery the persons, the words, and the actions. However, we must add two special considerations in each point: namely, how the Divinity which, during the Passion of our Lord, suspended its action and concealed itself so that He might suffer the more, now displays its presence by real and truly miraculous effects; and secondly, how He fills the office of a true friend, in consoling, teaching, and encouraging His disciples. These will help to enkindle His love in us and to unite us more closely and firmly with Himself.

5. In the Additions the following changes are also to be observed: First, as soon as we awake, we must represent to ourselves our Lord all joyful and glorious, thereby to excite in ourselves sentiments of joy and love and a vehement desire to do all we can to please and glorify Him. Secondly, forgetting our own miseries and trials, we should entertain those thoughts which are calculated to promote in us spiritual joy, hope, cheerfulness, and peace, and should take advantage of the light and sunshine, of scenes of natural beauty, and the like, as far as we may find them conducive to our rejoicing in our Creator and Redeemer.

Lastly, unless the season binds us to fasting and abstinence, we should remit our penances, but at the same time must be careful to observe the rules of temperance and moderation.

6. In fine, we shall best secure the fruit of this closing part of the Exercises by cultivating a loving and devout sense of God's presence; now admiring His infinite perfections, now dwelling on His goodness; at one time desiring to possess Him, at another protesting

[1] Suarez, lib. ix. c. vi. nn. 6, 7.

that our only desire is to please and to praise Him. It is thus that our soul becomes transformed, and from this we may reap more benefit than from all the rest of the Exercises, for the heart of man is like wax which much more easily receives an impression when it is softened by fire than when simply brought into contact with the cold metal stamp.

All this will, however, be merely make-believe, if meanwhile we foster an attachment to the things of this world, for unless our hearts are kept pure and free from all affection for the things of earth we cannot hope that they can ever be inflamed with Divine love.

Exercitants often experience in this part of their retreat great aridity and desolation; either because they are growing fatigued, or because they find that the resolutions they are only beginning to observe are very trying, or because the devil tempts them, desiring thus to frustrate the end of these meditations, which are intended to cheer us and confirm us in our election,[1] and to give us courage and strength in reducing it to practice.

THE RESURRECTION.[2]

The glorious Resurrection of our Lord and His appearance to His Blessed Mother will afford the subject of our first contemplation.

Begin with the preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Our Lord expired on the Cross, and His Body was laid in the tomb, but His Soul descended

[1] *Direct*, xxxvi. § 1.

[2] "And behold there was a great earthquake. For an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven: and coming, rolled back the stone and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the Angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come and see the place where the Lord was laid." (St. Matt. xxviii. 2—6.)

into Limbo, where He freed the souls of the just therein detained. On the third day He resumed His now glorified Body, rose from the dead, and appeared to His Blessed Mother.

Prelude 2.—We will visit in turn Limbo, the sepulchre, and the house in which our Lady was staying.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg that we may have real devotion, and rejoice with our Blessed Lord and our Lady, and may daily increase in solid and practical love of God.

First Point.—Why did our Lord's Soul at once hasten to Limbo? (*a*) To follow the same path that all the souls of the patriarchs, prophets, and holy servants of God had taken before Him; but mainly, (*β*) to comfort them and give them in person the glad news that the redemption of man had now been perfected, and that their imprisonment was at an end. Oh, the generous and loving Heart of our Lord! His first thought and concern is to console His friends and make them the sharers of His joy and happiness. What a stupendous change does His presence produce! The comparative gloom of centuries flies away before His dazzling beauty, and He presents to their enraptured gaze the Divine Essence, investing them with the Beatific Vision, and "enlightening them who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death." Let us ponder how these souls adored, praised, and poured forth their thanksgiving to their Divine Deliverer. Some had been detained for three thousand years and more, in separation from God; in addition to these were the prophets and patriarchs who had foretold the coming of the Redeemer, and had for so long ardently desired to see it. And now the happy day has come, the gates of Heaven are thrown open, the chains of sin are broken, and the holy souls are free to grace the triumph of the great Deliverer. Oh, what feelings of gratitude and love must have swelled their souls. Let us also take up their spirit, and together with them rejoice and thank our Lord for this our glorious redemption.

Second Point.—Let us now accompany our Lord as He leads forth these souls to the holy sepulchre, and shows them His dead Body, that they may read there how much it cost Him to redeem us, and view in His gaping wounds the depth of love with which He loved us.

Then, after we have paused once more to witness the havoc which our sins have wrought in His adorable Body, behold He reunites His Soul to it and rescues it from the jaws of death, filling it with Divine and glorified life, whilst the hosts of Heaven gather round it in adoration as it rises up immortal and imperishable, adorned with heavenly beauty and glory. A few moments ago it was all marked and torn and stained with blood, covered with wounds and scars, rigid and lifeless. Now each sore is as a noon-day sun, immortal life and glory have burst forth, that sacred Body is agile and impassible, it is clothed with majesty and pre-eminent sovereignty. How enraptured are they all as they gaze upon this sublime transfiguration! Jesus is indeed a true friend to make His friends so supremely happy. Well then, let us devote ourselves to Him, let us confide in Him. Let us love Him and banish all other objects which are not loved in Him, along with Him, and for His sake. He alone is worthy of our love, being apparelled with glory and Divine beauty, and adorned with those Five Wounds which He still retains in testimony of His love for us. How can we, if we have hearts at all, withhold the least particle of their affection from Him? Or how can we admire or love any object save Him only?

Let us place unbounded confidence in Him, since He has merited for us that we too shall put on immortality and incorruption, and shall be with our Lord for ever. Therefore, let us take courage and firmly resolve to suffer much and to labour hard for Him, inasmuch as we are sure "if we suffer, with Him also shall we reign,"[1] and in proportion as we share in His labours, we shall also partake of His reward.

[1] "A faithful saying. For if we be dead with Him, we shall live also with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Timothy ii. 12.)

Third Point.—Let us then accompany our dear Lord with His glorious retinue on His visit to His ever-Blessed Mother.[1] We may picture her all afflicted and disconsolate, retired and absorbed in prayer, waiting with a lively faith and unshaken confidence for the Resurrection of her beloved Child. God, who dispenses His graces and favours according to our confidence and desires, did not delay to comfort her. Oh, what a meeting must that have been! Oh, what overpowering consolation, what mutual overwhelming love! Surely it required the power of God to prevent it from proving fatal and destroying her natural life, proportioned as it was to her inexpressible dolours, and also to the love which she bore towards Him. Let us rejoice with her, and congratulate her, and take heart to suffer now and to be faithful to our resolutions, that later we also may be comforted.

Let us make the three colloquies, one to our Lady, one to our Lord, and one to the Eternal Father, and then conclude with the "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO MARY MAGDALENE.[2]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Mary Magdalene and two other pious women, taking with them precious ointments and spices, went to embalm the Body of our Lord: but not finding

[1] Although the Scriptures are silent as regards the apparition to our Blessed Lady, whilst they recount the various manifestations of Jesus to the disciples, Apostles, and to the holy women, St. Ignatius equivalently asserts it, and observes that "the Scripture supposes we have intelligence and sense, as it is written: Are you also yet without understanding?" Father Alvarez observes that it rests upon an unbroken and universal tradition. Our Lord too revealed to St. Teresa that His first appearance was to His Blessed Mother.

[2] "And on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre; and she saw the stone taken away from the sepulchre. . . . But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre; and she saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head, and

it in the sepulchre, they beheld instead an Angel who gave them news of the Resurrection. Magdalene, however, continued to weep and search here and there for her beloved Master, who appeared to her in the dress of a gardener.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit place ourselves at the tomb and observe what passes.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg the grace of spiritual joy and intense love of our Lord, and unbounded confidence in Him.

First Point.—These three pious women brought aromatic spices and ointments, and went with great solicitude to embalm the Body of Jesus, not thinking that He had arisen. Let us admire their love and affection, and their constancy towards Him even after death. How greatly pleased is God with those who are faithful in His service, not only when comforted and strengthened by special graces, but also in desolation, trials, and spiritual dryness.

It was not surprising that they followed our Lord after they had seen His miracles, heard His sermons, and beheld Him greeted as the Messiah. But they loved Him far more when they had seen Him die in ignominy, amidst the mockery and blasphemies of the priests and people. On their way to the sepulchre their fidelity was much tried. Who would roll back the stone from the mouth of the tomb? And again, they feared the soldiers, who might debar them from carrying out their design. But love and devotion and a firm will to do this office to their Divine Master overcame every difficulty, and God rewarded their constancy: for they found that the soldiers had fled, the stone was rolled back,

another at the feet where the Body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; and she knew not that it was Jesus. . . . Jesus saith to her, Mary. She turning to Him, saith to Him, Rabboni (which is to say, Master). Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." (St. John xx. 1—17.)

and instead of the Body they beheld an Angel, who gave them the joyful news of the glorious Resurrection. Let us learn to expect many difficulties in our way, but also many graces whereby to overcome them. Thus during these Exercises we have planned out a line of life in imitation of the example of our Blessed Lord, a life of detachment, of constant mortification, and of zeal to promote in ourselves and in others, the praise, service, and glory of God. These are our fragrant ointments and spices. But the devil and self-love and our own faint-heartedness will cry out within us, "Who shall roll back the stone?" To them will be added worldly respect, the jeers of companions, the example of the lukewarm—these are like the big stone which must be rolled back! But let us imitate the pious women, let us persist, and the Almighty will remove every obstacle. Let us seriously and resolutely stand to our election, and to the resolutions which by His grace we have made, and He will do the rest: for He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength.[1]

Second Point.—The women, affrighted, ran to inform the Apostles. Then Magdalene returned to the tomb, and tarried near it shedding bitter tears for the absence of the Sacred Body, which she thought was stolen; again and again she went and looked into the sepulchre. In vain the two angels by their questions strove to comfort her, for she turned aside to go and seek the object of her love. Our Lord, in the garb of a gardener, confronts her, and at once she begs Him to inform her where they have put the corpse; He reveals Himself by His voice, and addresses her by her name and displays to her His glorified Humanity, whilst at the same time He fills her heart with joy and consolation in reward of her love and constancy. Oh! the generous love and bounty of our Lord. Let us fall with her at His

[1] "Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human. And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able; but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. x. 13.)

feet and make our acts of adoration and of love towards Him, who is so fond of us that, if we seek Him with devotion and perseverance, He will come to visit us with His consolations. And when in desolation we fancy we have lost Him, let us persevere in seeking after Him, and we shall soon find Him.

Third Point.—But most of all, we must throw ourselves with unbounded confidence upon our dear Lord, as did the Magdalene to whom He appeared after visiting His Blessed Mother, before even showing Himself to the other pious women or to the Apostles. And what merit had she to be thus distinguished above the rest? Had she not been a sinner in the city? Was is not out of her that He had driven seven devils? Yet she is singularly beloved and specially honoured! Our Lord had forgiven the past; He looks only at what we are, not at what we have been, and loves most those who most love and seek Him. Oh! how this should enlarge our hearts to confide in Him and to love and serve Him! He will receive us with the greater tenderness if, having sinned with Magdalene, we imitate her repentance. We must therefore make before Him a firm resolution to love and serve Him, and this the more faithfully, the greater our sins have been; and let us beg Him to increase our love and confidence.

End with the "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE HOLY WOMEN.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—The holy women, finding the tomb open and being told by the Angel that our Lord had arisen,

[1] "And they went out quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples. And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail. But they came up and took hold of His feet, and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see Me." (St. Matt. xxviii. 8—10.)

went at his bidding to announce the glad tidings to the Apostles. On the way our Lord appeared to them.

Prelude 2.—Accompany them in spirit as they go, and adore our Lord along with them.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg a share in the love and in the joy of these pious women.

First Point.—Our Lord did not appear to the women when they looked into the sepulchre, but the Angel bade them go and tell the Apostles that He had risen. They believed and promptly obeyed, and as they hurried on their way Jesus met them. This was to show us the reward which God attaches to lively faith and prompt obedience. Let us learn to regard all Superiors in a spirit of faith as holding the place of God, and to carry out immediately and cheerfully the orders which they give us; so shall we secure the signal favour of God and a special blessing on all we do. To hear willingly, take counsel, and humbly submit our judgment, is sure to be rewarded with clear illumination how to act even in the most difficult circumstances.

Second Point.—The amiability with which our Lord received them. Jesus met them, courteously saluted them, and bade them take courage and not be afraid. How consoled and inflamed with love must they have been to see God, and to be greeted by Him. When will that happy time come when we shall be practically convinced that true peace and solid happiness are to be found only in God? We see it in the saints, whose joy and tranquillity were never disturbed amidst worldly adversity, or cruel sufferings and hardships, because Jesus was ever present to them, and they felt assured of His love and protection. If we do not experience these effects, it is because we do not serve Him thoroughly, but with negligence and lukewarmness. Let us make the colloquy which our hearts will suggest.

Third Point.—The Message. "Tell My brethren to go into Galilee, there they shall see Me." They had abandoned Him in His Passion, fled from or denied Him, they had lent an incredulous ear to Magdalene, and

regarded her news as the dreams and imaginings of a woman. One might naturally suppose that our Lord would cease to care for them, or that His message would contain words of reproach for their ingratitude, cowardice, and incredulity. But not so! it was a message of kindness, announcing that He had arisen, and was about to meet them. He calls them His brethren, to give them courage and to show how much He still loves them. Let us admire His gentle benignity, let us thank Him for the honour He has done us in making us His brethren, and let us determine to prove ourselves worthy of so condescending and affectionate a title.

End with the "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Two of the disciples, on their way to Emmaus, were discoursing on the late sad events that had happened, when they were overtaken by a stranger who joined in their conversation. On arriving at the inn He sat with them at table, and they did not recognize Him to be Jesus until the breaking of bread.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture to ourselves the road

[1] "And behold, two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He said to them, What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad? . . . Then He said to them, O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered, and so to enter into His glory? . . . And their eyes were opened and they knew Him and He vanished out of their sight." (St. Luke xxiv. 13—31.)

stretching along for seven miles, the inn also, and the supper at which they sat down.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg our Lord to be our comfort in every time of sadness and trial.

First Point.—Reflect on the fear and distress of the disciples at witnessing the rage of the priests and of the people against the followers of the Divine Master whom they had crucified. Oppressed with anguish and disappointment at the loss of Him whom they had looked upon as the Redeemer of Israel, they now gave up all hopes, for He had been buried nearly three days, and they had heard no more of Him. How often does our Lord act thus with those who love Him? They seem deprived of all light, of all spiritual comfort, and of any token of His presence; and are consequently much depressed, through fear that they have lost God and His grace, and they have become a prey to faintness, desolation, and aridity. Yet it is just then that He is nearest to them. He allows a similar trial to befall His servants when He intends to confer some grace upon them. Let us learn in such cases to be patient, to humble ourselves, and to pour out our hearts more fervently in converse with Him as did these disciples, and foster a more lively confidence in Him.

Second Point.—The dispositions which our Lord required in His disciples before making Himself known to them were: first, that they should disclose to Him their melancholy and their languishing faith; secondly, by His discourse He stirs up their faith and excites in them fervour and devotion; thirdly, He enkindles their earnestness and charity by seeming as though about to leave them. So if we have grown cold in the service of God, we should seek succour and advice from our spiritual director, we should meditate on things eternal, and use loving violence in urging God, by constant and persevering prayer, to come and remain with us.

Third Point.—The disciples knew Him in the blessing of bread. As it is commonly supposed, He rewarded them with a view of His glory and gave them Holy

Communion. If we approach with faith, confidence, love, and desire to this Holy Sacrament, we also shall find that we are beginning to know our Lord more and more clearly, and to love Him more tenderly and more intensely.

End with the "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES IN THE UPPER CHAMBER.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—When all the Apostles except Thomas, were gathered together in much fear and agitation, Jesus appeared in their midst, and bestowed on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, together with the power to remit sins.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit place ourselves in that famous Cenacle, &c.

Prelude 3.—Beg grace to appreciate the goodness and mercy of our Lord.

First Point.—The disciples were assembled together, being united through holy charity with our dear Lord and with each other; it is to them thus united that He loves to come, and wherever He is He brings with Him peace and comfort. But the man who is not animated by fraternal charity is a stranger to peace even with himself, for Jesus does not dwell in him. Let us therefore study to preserve and promote union and charity in ourselves and in others, to renounce all special attrac-

[1] "Now when it was late the same day, the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be to you. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again, Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (St. John xx. 19—23. Comp. St. Luke xxiv.)

tions and aversions, as well as backbiting and detraction, and learn to be gentle, forgiving, and self-sacrificing. A house wherein charity prevails is a heaven, but if charity be absent from it, it is a hell. At all cost to self and to our own feelings we must cultivate charity.

Second Point.—The disciples were still incredulous and slow to believe that our Lord had risen. So far from reprimanding them, He actually condescends to show them His hands, His feet and His side, not only that He may give them a palpable sign of His Resurrection, but may also gently reprove them in that they have so soon forgotten His care for them. Let us picture the tenderness, love, and joy with which the sight of their dear Lord inspired them, and with what ecstasy they gazed upon His Wounds of dazzling brightness, devoutly kissing them and bedewing them with their warm tears. Picture Him as He shows each one to them, and listen to the words of love which He breathes at the same time. Oh! let us extend to Him our hands and hearts in return—not the *hands only* of our external acts in the pulpit or confessional, in visiting the sick, or in other ministerial duties, which may be prompted by ambition, interest, rivalry, or vanity, but our *hearts* also, through our pure and holy intentions, our fidelity in prayer, our practical love of Him, and our scrupulous observance of all our holy rules; but more especially by conquering ourselves in whatever is repugnant to our human nature; for our love of Him will grow more perfect in proportion as we do violence to ourselves.[1]

Third Point.—Jesus breathed upon them and communicated the Holy Ghost to them; and the same commission which He received from His Father does He hand on to them. Let us therefore inquire in what manner He was sent. He was sent in poverty and in contempt, He was persecuted, and died in ignominy and in torture, and by this means He wrought the redemption of the world. Now, the disciple must not be above his Master; let us then be well persuaded that to convert and

[1] "Tantum proficies quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris." (à Kempis.)

save souls we too must suffer much, must endure persecutions and affronts, must sacrifice reputation and ease, and, if need be, even life itself.

How great a comfort and honour it should be to us to undergo all this when we see that we are treated like our dear Lord! Had we only a real and lively faith, with what courage and joy would not this thought inspire us.

Let us beg earnestly of our Lord that He will give us this spirit and courage, and let us offer ourselves up to suffer any hardship for His sake, *Da quod jubes et jube quod vis*.

Make a fervent colloquy, and end with the "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE DISCIPLES AND ST. THOMAS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—On the eighth day after His Resurrection, when Thomas was with the other Apostles, Jesus appears and invites Thomas to test His Wounds: upon which the Apostle confesses his fault, and repairs the scandal which he had given.

Prelude 2.—Let us in spirit place ourselves in the Cenacle.

Prelude 3.—Let us beg a spirit of docility to God's holy inspirations.

First Point.—We know not the reason of the Apostle's absence; but whatever it was it cost him dear, as he lost the visit of our Lord, and fell into the sin of incredulity. This should teach us to adhere to discipline and to

[1] "After eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said, My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed." (St. John xx. 26—29.)

practise great fidelity in all public duties. Further it should show us the necessity of great circumspection, for from small beginnings and imperfections, disastrous consequences may ensue. Thus, owing to his absence from the rest Thomas fell so shamefully as to be on the point of losing his faith and the whole merit of his apostleship. We also may begin to fall away through negligence and infidelity in our service of God; and then proceed with our eyes open to commit deliberate venial sins, until we end by falling into mortal sin. Another lesson we ought to take to heart is the performance of our spiritual duties in due time, and as far as possible with the rest of the community. Woe to us if we spend the time in study, in chatting, or sleeping! By so doing we shall not only lose those visits with which our Lord is wont to reward the faithful and fervent, but we shall expose ourselves to some considerable fault owing to the withdrawal of grace. We are at times surprised that we have no feeling of fervour or devotion, that our spiritual duties are performed in coldness and aridity, and it seems as if our Lord had turned His face from us; perhaps this comes from not performing them in proper time, from our interrupting or abbreviating them; if so, let us apply the remedy at once, and endeavour to merit the visits of our Lord.

Second Point.—After persisting in his incredulity for eight days, Thomas was with the rest, when our Blessed Lord appeared again with the offer of peace: and in His infinite gentleness and condescension bids Thomas examine His Wounds and cease to be incredulous. He comes with the object of comforting and strengthening His undeserving Apostle. He will not let him perish. St. Thomas, amazed and conscience-stricken, threw himself at His feet, and made a profound act of faith. Oh! how often, *very* often has our Lord shown this condescension and mercy to us—how many interior revelations, how many aspirations of heart, has He not sent to us. How many miracles of grace has He not wrought in our souls, to place and keep us in the safe way of salva-

tion! Let us contemplate this our good Master; let us kiss His Wounds, let us draw near to His Blessed Heart, and let us assure Him of our fidelity for the future, and that He alone shall be our "Lord and our God."

Third Point.—Jesus exclaims, "Blessed they who have not seen, but have believed." It is a great maxim of the inner life, not to be guided by outward considerations, or by the judgment of the senses, for these conduce rather to spiritual blindness, but by that spirit of faith, which is the *argumentum non apparentium.* Do we direct ourselves by the principles of true faith in the performance of our duties, in our resolutions and actions, or only by the attraction of our fancy and bent of mind, and of human and worldly motives? If ordered to do anything by our Superiors, does this appear as a wrong done to us, or do we complain that it will discredit us, and that it goes against our humour, convenience, and ease? We are always standing on a precipice, and liable to fall, if we do not cultivate the spirit of holy faith, and act from supernatural motives. For in the supernatural life we have seen that we must suffer, and suffer much: and mere natural motives are quite insufficient to enable us to persevere in this. It is only by acting for the love of God that we shall lay up a store of merit, and shall enjoy even on earth an unspeakable beatitude.

End with a colloquy and the "Our Father."

THE APPARITION TO THE APOSTLES ON LAKE TIBERIAS.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Peter and John together with the other disciples were engaged in fishing on the Sea of Tiberias, when Jesus, from the shore, makes Himself known to

[1] "And they went forth and entered into the ship: and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come Jesus stood on the shore: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus, therefore, said

them by the miraculous capture of fishes; they hasten to throw themselves at His feet; while He invites them to eat, and Himself entertains them.

Prelude 2.—Let us picture this scene before our eyes, and hear and note all that transpires.

Prelude 3.—Let us ask for the grace of rejoicing at the goodness of our Lord, who makes Himself our companion, and helps us in all the circumstances of life.

First Point.—The Apostles had laboured all night to no purpose, when our Lord appeared and bade them cast their net on the right of their boat, and it was found at once full of fishes. John, the clean of heart, recognized Jesus, and told Peter. Jesus by this miracle would show them that, as He was going to make them fishers of men, the two dispositions which would be requisite for their success, were diffidence in themselves and absolute confidence in Him. These two virtues are necessary to secure the blessing of God, and without that blessing all our labour and talents are quite useless: "God alone can give the increase."[1] From Him alone can we expect success, and from Him must we strive to obtain it by living a holy life, by prayer, and by ever acting with a pure intention. It is not through talents, nor brilliant discourses, nor by great display that souls are gained to God. Let us convince ourselves of this certainty.

Second Point.—Our Lord invites His disciples to come and eat: then He took into His blessed hands bread, and gave to them, and fish in like manner. Oh, the goodness, the humility, the thoughtfulness of our most amiable

to them: Children, have you any meat? They said to Him: No. He said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast, therefore: and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. . . . Jesus saith to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. . . . Jesus saith to them: Come and dine: and none of them who were at meat durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." (St. John xx. 3—13.)

[1] "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.)

Lord, in His friendly and familiar treatment of these poor fishermen! As long as we are labouring for souls we are like fishermen on the sea, filled with anxiety, overwhelmed with toil, and surrounded by cares and works of charity, and when this is over we must get to shore, in some convenient place with Jesus; we must look to ourselves and gain new strength, lest while preaching to others we ourselves become castaways. We must so devote ourselves to our neighbours as not to forget ourselves or neglect the care of our own souls; and by prayer and interior exercises must obtain from Jesus that food of solid virtues without which all labour for our neighbours would be ineffectual.

Third Point.—Then our Lord addressed Peter,[1] putting to him three times the same question, and asking him if he loved Him. This action made Peter sad and mistrustful of himself, for it reminded him of his former presumption, self-confidence, and fall, but yet he answered, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Then our Lord gave him His Divine commission to feed and rule His flock, and bade him follow Him. At once Peter left all else and followed Jesus; like him, all who are called to the sacred ministry have their share in this two-fold commission. They have to feed the flock of Christ with sermons, with the sacraments, with spiritual instructions. But before doing so we must put this question to ourselves, Do we love God more than the rest? Have we true and solid virtue, are we especially devout and fervent and able to communicate our piety to others? What good can we expect to produce in our neighbours if they do not see us more holy than

[1] "When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Be a shepherd to My lambs. He saith to him a third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me. . . . He said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep." (St. John xxi. 15—17.)

themselves, less attached to our own ease or interest, less irascible, impatient, ambitious, and uncharitable than themselves? Wherefore we should often put this question to ourselves, "Dost thou love Me more than these?" Then only shall we be worthy apostles, when with Peter we can say, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Again, that we may produce fruit in souls we must obey the call to follow Christ. We have made the resolution now, and we have made it often before; let us never lose sight of it again. Let us bear constantly before us the example of our Lord, how He thought, spoke, and acted; and in every circumstance of life let us copy Him as our model.

In our colloquy, we should address ourselves first to our Lord and beg Him to disclose to us any attachment which may stand in the way of our loving Him more than these, and to grant us grace to root this out of our souls, and also that we may be resolved and may persevere in our resolution to follow Him, whithersoever He may be pleased to lead us. End with the "Our Father."

THE ASCENSION.[1]

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—After our Lord had spent forty days comforting and teaching His Apostles, He met them for the last time in the memorable Cenacle in Jerusalem, to eat with them and address them before parting. He then led them to Mount Olivet, and in their presence He was taken up into Heaven. Two angels are sent to awaken them out of their ecstasy, and to inform them that He will

[1] "And when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to Heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven." (Acts i. 9—12.)

come again to judge all men, as they have seen Him going up to Heaven.

Prelude 2.—Let us place ourselves as humble spectators of this mystery.

Prelude 3.—Pray that the remembrance of this glory may give us courage to face and overcome every difficulty.

First Point.—The circumstances preceding the Ascension. Jesus had appointed as the place of His Ascension the Mount of Olives, and not Mount Thabor, in order to teach us that the way to Heaven is by suffering and by the Cross; and whether we will it or not, we must of necessity pass through the trials which Providence has arranged for our sanctification. Again, Jesus begins His discourse to His disciples by reproaching some of them with their slowness of belief in the truth of His Resurrection, on the evidence of those who had seen Him. Let us take this reproach to ourselves. During our retreat has He not often spoken to us reproachfully, either by Himself or through others? This may be bitter, but if we accept it, it brings peace, for it is done through love—*Ego quos amo, arguo*[1]—and we must accept it in the same loving spirit.

He tells them that they shall be witnesses to Him in Jerusalem and to the bounds of the earth, to make known to men what He had done and suffered out of love for them, and to inflame their hearts with love for Him in return. This He deserves at our hands, and if we have a spark of feeling, of love, or gratitude, we should labour to carry out this commission by sacrificing our lives to promote the glory of God, and to make known to the world the nobility, the merit, the goodness, and the mercy of Jesus Christ. To this end and to this object we should devote all our thoughts, words, actions, nay, our very lives themselves. This we ought to do the more earnestly in order to repair for our past coldness and indifference. Let us admire the gentleness and love which He displays to all as He sits with them at table, and the humility and condescension which He inculcates by His example. He who is in the possession of infinite glory

[1] Apoc. iii. 19.

and is about shortly to manifest it, appears amongst them without any outward sign of Majesty. What a lesson does He not here give us that we should hide the graces and gifts of God, and act humbly, affably, and unassumingly in our intercourse with others.

Second Point.—The manner of the Ascension. When they had all reached the top of Mount Olivet, He cast His eyes round upon them imparting to them His last farewell, and lifting up His hands to bless them. Then He began to ascend into the air, whilst His Mother and the Apostles and disciples gazed in silent wonder on His Sacred Humanity, which, as it rose towards Heaven, shone forth far brighter than the sun, until at length a cloud appeared beneath His feet and shut Him out from their sight. Let us ponder the mingled feelings which took possession of their souls. Admiration of His beauty and glory, intense love awakened by His goodness, joy at the sight of His triumph, and pained regret in His departure. Oh, how dreary did all this world appear to them without the presence of Jesus! It ought to be the same with us. If we have not Jesus with us, God help us! but if we have Him, why should we care for anything else in the world? Henceforth let our conversation be in Heaven, let us care but for one thing on earth, and that is to make Him known, praised, and loved, despite hardships, persecutions, or death itself.

Having ascended to Heaven, He flings wide the gates for the first time, and, amidst the acclamations of the angelic hosts, takes possession of the Kingdom which He has purchased for us at the price of His Most Precious Blood and His infinite merits.[1] Let us congratulate our sweet Lord and offer Him our whole hearts, protesting that henceforth He shall be the only object of our love in life and death.

[1] "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of glory shall enter in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord who is strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates; and the King of glory shall enter in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory." (Psalm xxiii. 7—9.)

Third Point.—Whilst the disciples stood with eyes and hearts raised in ecstasy towards the object which they had lost, two angels were despatched by our Lord to remind them that in due time He would return as they had seen Him go, and in the Day of Judgment He would come for them, would glorify them in body and soul, and would take them to share with Him His everlasting glory. Wherefore sustained by this cheering hope for the loss they had experienced, they returned in great joy to Jerusalem.

Such, too, must be our comfort amidst all our fatigues, hardships, and sufferings in the service of God. The joyful day will dawn when our Lord will come for us, and will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Let us make the usual colloquies and end with the "Our Father."

THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Place yourself in spirit in those realms of bliss.

Prelude 2.—Pray also for an earnest desire to attain a share in the glory of the saints, and for grace so to live that we may secure it.

First Point.—In Paradise no evil can be present. Over its gates is written, "Here there is no death, wailing, or sorrow," &c. As soon as we have entered there, all trouble is at an end; hardships, anxieties, fears, adversities, pains, and persecutions have fled. There God dries up our tears, and gives us a joyful welcome. When we contemplate this, let us resolve to be patient, fully desirous of suffering much in this life for the love of God, knowing that the suffering will soon be over, but that our reward will never end. Oh, blessed suffering which will be followed by so rich a reward! Let us

determine to secure it at all costs. Were there on this earth any spot in which all evil and misery were unknown, everyone would go through fire and water to reach it; and shall we be less in earnest when it is a question of Heaven, and when at the same time at so small a cost we can succeed in gaining it? The sacrifices gladly made by the children of this world to gain a little short-lived happiness ought to be a stimulus to us!

Second Point.—In Paradise we shall possess every good thing. All kinds of riches are stored up there, and are enjoyed by all in the highest degree of perfection. In this world the goods we possess are few and meagre, and often cannot be enjoyed at the same time, for they are incompatible with each other, while through the defectiveness of our faculties and senses the pleasure derived from them is very slight, and often ends in discontent and disgust; whereas in Heaven the faculties and powers of both soul and body will be so elevated and ennobled that they will be able to embrace every kind of good, with a rapture so all-comprehending and abiding that no wish can fail to be most perfectly satisfied. Let us well consider these five varieties of Heavenly blessing.

(*a*) The place itself, which is magnificent, and sumptuously appointed beyond all imagination, so that in comparison with it the beauty and splendour of this whole world will appear no better than a wretched and loathsome hovel.

(*β*) The company and society of the elect, who are all united together by the closest bonds of ardent love and charity, the happiness of each one adding to that of all the rest, the glory too and beauty of one increasing and enhancing the combined glory of the others.

(*γ*) We shall enjoy a most distinct knowledge of all things created.

(*δ*) Our glorified bodies will be gifted with brightness, agility, impassibility, and immortality.

(*ε*) Above all, we shall feast on the sight of God and on the riches of His love, by virtue of which each of the

elect can say, "I possess God Himself, in whom is every, even the most sovereign, good." Reflect on each and all the good things we might possibly enjoy in this world, and then compare them with what we expect to possess in Heaven, and how truly shall we be able to say with St. Ignatius: *Quam sordet mihi terra cum cœlum aspicio.* In truth, the world is a liar. It makes a false and empty show and gives tinsel promises; it pours into our ears words, words, words; but they are *vox et præterea nihil.* The world by its wiles and flattery leads us on to expect great things, but gives us nothing, or at most nothing substantial, and even that not for long. How far otherwise is the conduct of our Lord, who, like a true and sincere friend, both promises and gives us all, and this within the compass of two syllables—Himself, seeing that in Him we have the fulfilment of all our desires. Let us then look upon all things in this world as so much dirt, deserving only of our disdain and contempt, and let us cheerfully cast them away from us.[1]

Third Point.—This possession of Heaven is eternal. What transports of bliss shall be ours when, on reaching that harbour of peace, we feel it will remain with us for ever, and can never be lost; that therein we are placed beyond all danger; that we are safe; and need never more fear, never more dread evil, never more experience anxiety or care: *Semper cum Domino erimus.* Let this thought cause us to fly from imperfections or evil habits, and to change the whole tenour of our lives. If we are to put on the new man in Heaven, we must cast off the old man in this life; if we are to secure this eternal peace, we must use violence to ourselves in time.

Were we to consult the saints in Heaven, what counsel could they give us but that which by His words and example Jesus Christ has already given us—to be poor here, to be detached from all things, be mortified and humble. The more we excel in these qualities the greater shall be our glory in Heaven.

End with the "Our Father."

[1] Hebrews x. 34.

ON LOVE FOR JESUS CHRIST.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine our Lord striving to win the hearts of men, some through the fear that they may have offended Him, others by the argument of His great love for them, others again with the attractive force of His interior loveliness.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg God to set our hearts on fire with love for Him.

First Point.—The consciousness of our having offended Him binds us to love Him now. The thought that God is a Being infinitely glorious, noble and lovable, and infinitely good in Himself, when taken in conjunction with the sense of our blindness, meanness, and infatuation in offending and helping to betray Him, is enough to torture the soul and overwhelm it with poignant anguish. Now let us reflect how we have been treating our Lord up to this. Let us view Him tied to the pillar, mangled and disfigured. How many cruel stripes have we inflicted on that beautiful Body, by how many and grievous sins have we not wounded Him! How barbarous have we shown ourselves in thus treating Him worse than any dog! How can we atone to Him for such inhuman cruelty? The child who in a fit of passion has laid hands on a loving mother, when he comes to himself and sees the sad effects of his malice, is inconsolable in his grief, and strives to prove the intensity of his love by the intensity of his sorrow and the sacrifices which love prompts him to make in reparation. So should it be with us. We have immensely offended Jesus Christ, and that for a long time. We were blind and mad to be so ungrateful: we surely cannot rest satisfied with but a halting love in return. We are bound to love Him with greater fulness and intensity in proportion to the sins by which we have offended Him. And reflect besides how He has treated us all the time we were sinning against Him! So gentle,

so patient, nay, actually heaping upon our souls fresh and signal graces at the very time we were insulting Him. Thus did He mercifully seek after us whilst we were trying to escape from Him, and show at the same time to His Eternal Father the wounds inflicted on Him by us and for our sakes, thereby to screen us from the punishments which else would have fallen upon us, and which we most richly deserved. Oh! how powerful a motive does not the mere thought of this become to make every effort to blot out our cruelty and black ingratitude, by trying hard to love Him thoroughly in future. While He held out His hand to embrace us, we have plunged the dagger into His blessed Heart and nailed His hands to the Cross, and yet He offered the Blood that came forth from the Wounds we made, to wash away our guilt. How could we possibly have treated such infinite goodness with ingratitude so shameful. We would not have perpetrated it even towards a dumb animal. Surely this thought alone were sufficient to transfix our hearts and inflame them with the tenderest love. At the feet of our dear Lord, let us contrast His treatment of us and our behaviour towards Him; and then surely our cheeks will burn with shame and our hearts be filled with compunction at so sad a difference.

Second Point.—Let us next see how He has loved us. This we can never know or understand adequately; but the moment that we enter Heaven and imprint our first kiss on His Sacred Side, we shall see within that opening the furnace of charity which glows in His adorable Heart towards all. At present we may muse on what He has done for us and what He has undergone for us, seeing that these are the best tokens of His ardent love. Our poor souls have found a place in His Sacred Heart from all eternity, for then He resolved and decreed the many favours which He was to confer on us in time. Even then He preferred us to so many who would have easily proved more deserving objects of His love. He has given us being, life, and health during so many years, has preserved to us the use of our senses, mental faculties, and other goods

of nature, and all these almost without our adverting to them. And when we come to estimate our supernatural benefits, how many of these do we not enjoy, how immense their value! even at no less cost than the infinite price of His Passion and Death. Among these are our call to the true faith, our reception of the sacraments, the great and countless graces, illustrations, and affections with which He has inundated our hearts—sins so often pardoned, temptations overcome, dangerous occasions removed. And as if all this was not enough, He would be consumed Himself for love of us,—witness His precious Life all employed in our behalf and for our advantage, His birth in a vile stable, His long and hard labour in a workman's shop, His journeyings to and fro that He might teach us the way to Heaven, and the breathing forth of His Soul amid incredible torments and the utmost ignominies. Oh, how could He, God though He is, give me greater proofs of His love? We can now understand why He willed that His Blessed Side should be opened, it was that He might give each one of us a place within His Sacred Heart. Surely if we have any hearts at all we must at the sight of so many favours, labours, and wounds, and at the sight of so much Blood cry out with the Apostle, *Charitas Christi urget nos.* "I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me." Oh, that we could say with truth: "Tell Him, my Beloved, that I am languishing with love."[1]

Third Point.—He is most lovely and worthy to be loved. The saints who knew Jesus Christ, have never been able to find words in which to express their thoughts or appreciation of those excellencies in Him which so greatly inflame them with His love. The Blessed Trinity framed within the mystery of the Incarnation an object most worthy of the love of God and of men, and therefore endowed It with all goodness and perfection, with all grace and beauty. If we consider Him as God, He is the great ocean from which all that is lovely on earth or in the universe is but a thin streamlet;

[1] Cant. v. 8.

if as Man, He is a Son worthy of the most lovely of women, being gifted with such charm and majesty that even as an Infant the bare sight of Him set the hearts of shepherds and kings on fire with love and admiration. At twelve, when He spoke in the Temple, doctors and priests hung on His lips; throughout His Life, His conduct was so sweet and gentle, His Heart so compassionate and tender, that all His thoughts, words, and actions were directed solely to the advantage of mankind, and even on the Cross His bowed Head, expanded arms, and opened side all challenged our love.

But if His Humanity was so lovely on earth, what it now is who can conceive? Of all the created objects in Paradise, it is the loveliest! The view and possession of that Humanity by the saints in Heaven will for all eternity make it the centre of their adoration, admiration, and praise, and, next to the Beatific Vision, will form their greatest source of happiness. Yes! there we shall love Him with all our heart and soul, but it will be a love without merit, because His infinite goodness and beauty irresistibly demand all our love. Let us then begin now to love Him with all our might, while our love is meritorious, and turns in some measure to His greater glory as coming from free agents.

Let us conclude by making fervent acts of love of our dear Lord, and let us offer ourselves without reserve to Him, protesting that henceforth He shall be the only object of our love in life and death. Conclude with these three colloquies: to our Blessed Lady, to the Sacred Humanity of our Divine Lord, and to the Eternal Father; humbly imploring grace to keep this holy resolution. Finally say the "Our Father."

CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL.

NOTE.—The love for our Lord does not consist merely in that tender affection which we feel in meditating on His sublime loveliness and affection, which, unless manifested and proved by actions, is by no means sufficient. If we really love Him, we must seek out and find what more sure proof of it we can give; and this is presented in the axiom, *Idem velle, idem nolle, ea demum firma est amicitia*, or, in other words, a practical conformity to His holy will is the only unmistakable proof we can give that we love God and are loved by Him in return. This is solid and true love, it is like the love which the blessed in Heaven bear to Him.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us humbly place ourselves in the presence of God our Lord as He guides and rules all things by His Divine providence.

Prelude 2.—Let us entreat His grace that our wills may in every circumstance and event of life be in perfect harmony with His.

First Point.—The great advantages of this conformity. (*a*) In it consists our real sanctity and perfection; for the most holy will of God is the first and supreme rule of all morality and all perfection, and consequently in conforming our will to His in a spirit of respect and love for Him, we are sure to act well and to please Him. It was this that made the Blessed Virgin the holiest of all creatures, her being of all mankind the most conformed to and the most perfect in fulfilling the whole will of God. And our Lord, who was the visible rule of all sanctity and perfection, teaches us by His own example, "To do always what is pleasing unto Him."[1] With this principle He began His life;[2] this was His daily food.[3]

[1] St. John viii. 29.

[2] "In the head of the book it is written of Me, that I should do Thy will: O My God, I have willed it, and Thy law in the midst of My heart." (Psalm xxxix. 8.)

[3] "Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work." (St. John iv. 34.)

(β) In it we find true and unshaken peace of mind, and contentment of heart. To seek this in anything else is folly and hopeless labour. To seek it in change of place, or of office, or of companions; in pleasure, or honour, or any other worldly object, is to cut ourselves off from all real peace, seeing that they often cannot be obtained, and if attained, they may be lost at any moment. A sound peace and contentment must be independent of place, time, or employment, and can be no other than the sweet and holy will of God, a joy which no one can take away from us.[1]

Let us convince ourselves of this great truth, that as self-will is the source in us of all evil, so in the accomplishment of God's will consists all our true happiness and satisfaction.

Second Point. — The motives of this conformity. (α) We believe that God is the *Sovereign Good*, and so worthy of all our love, that if we had the love of all mankind, and of all the angels in Heaven, we could not love Him adequately. If we truly esteem and love a person, a word or a hint from him is enough to obtain anything from us—we feel we *cannot say no* to him; nay, we feel it an honour and a sincere pleasure to cause him any pleasure or happiness, no matter how much it may cost us. Most real then should be our readiness and our delight to make any sacrifice in order to please our dear Lord. And this we do whenever we conform our will to His.

(β) Moreover, He is our *Supreme Lord* and *Master*, and has therefore the right to dispose of us as He pleases; it is His province to command, and His commands are always the best, the wisest, and the most perfect; our duty is simply and blindly to obey, and as servants our will must be absolutely subordinated to His. Since this is true, and recognized in the relations of man with his fellow-man, how infinitely more true is it

[1] "So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." (St. John xvi. 22.)

between us and God our Lord. Be it ours to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what is good in His sight."[1]

(γ) Again, He is our most *loving Father*, and ever exercises a most providential watchfulness and care over us; wherefore we ought to conform to His will like dutiful children, not only out of the respect we owe Him, but also out of consideration of our own advantage, knowing well that our Heavenly Father will in all things provide for our solid welfare. The love of earthly parents is often very limited, their providence is blind and very fallible, and hence they do not always seek the real good of their children, nor even know in what it consists, or if they do, they have no power to secure it for them. How different is our Heavenly Father in this regard. We are sure that He loves us most tenderly, disposes always for our own good and for His greater glory everything which affects us, in His infinite wisdom knows what is best for us, and by His infinite power supplies the means to attain it. This He can do in spite of all the obstacles and difficulties which our defective sight magnifies in our eyes. Oh, then, let us throw ourselves without reserve into the arms of God, and cheerfully accept whatever He is pleased to send us, knowing that everything must turn to our advantage which passes through the hands of so loving a Father. On the other hand, consider the folly of those who through fancied good policy, specious pretexts, and tortuous ways, endeavour to compass their private ends, to angle for some particular post or employment, to contrive being sent to such and such a place, imagining that they thereby promote their own interests, more than if they resigned themselves entirely to the Divine will in a true spirit of perfect indifference and confidence. Nay, were it left to us to make choice of any place or employment, we ought not to act on the suggestion, but leave all absolutely in the hands of God, and of those whom He has appointed over us. If we once for all determine to resign ourselves into the hands of

[1] 1 Kings iii. 18.

God, we shall find by experience that He will fill us with happiness and peace, and all things will turn to our spiritual welfare, for we are then under the care of a loving Father who is all wise, all good, and all powerful, who knows our true good, is willing and desirous to promote it, while no one can possibly prevent us from attaining it.

Third Point.—The practical exercise of this conformity to God's will. Let us every morning present ourselves to God as little children, protesting that we leave ourselves entirely at His disposal and accept freely whatever He may please to arrange for the day, submitting in all things to His ever adorable will. Let us from time to time also thus renew our offering in union with our dear Lord, saying, "Be it so, because you are pleased it should be so." "Thy blessed will be done," especially when we are overtaken by any calamity, trouble, or misfortune. Of what avail is it to get angry, to fret or murmur against those who annoy us? Let us not forget that everything which our Lord permits is intended for our real good, either directly or indirectly, and consequently let us drink the chalice, for it is prepared and presented to us by our Father in Heaven.

Lastly, let us resolve to practise an exact obedience, in the spirit of faith. True sanctity consists in accomplishing the will of God. Now we are never left in doubt as to what this will is, for it is clearly pointed out by our Rules and the orders of Superiors; and in this respect we have an immense advantage over those living in the world, though we become less excusable before the Divine tribunal if we do not fulfil it. Let our constant prayer be *Fiat voluntas tua*, and that, not in a spirit of repugnance or compulsion, but cheerfully, confidingly, and in the spirit of love.

End with the "Our Father."

ON PERSEVERANCE.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us imagine that our Lord addresses us in the words, "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us implore the grace of holy perseverance.

First Point.—Whatever is not profitable for our eternity is sheer vanity. Let us reflect that one of the greatest obstacles to perfection is attachment to the external goods of earth, and to our own ease and convenience; and yet we know that these are nothing but vanity, falsehood, and emptiness. We shall live only a few short years, and we may, by following our own humour and caprice, and indulging our passions, snatch some sorry satisfaction, enjoy a little false liberty, or gain some paltry honour and notoriety. But what will all this be worth in the end? It cannot and does not quiet or satisfy the mind and heart at the time, and death will rob us of it all at last; in what light shall we then view these things, and what esteem shall we then set on them? One single good action will give us solid comfort, and we shall greatly value it—but the rest will cause us only pain and loathing, or at least much anxiety.

Let us at once detach ourselves entirely from all things in this world, and we shall thus secure a powerful help to perseverance.

Second Point.—God will be our Judge; and if we satisfy Him, we satisfy every obligation. We must tread underfoot all merely human considerations. Sometimes those who are leading less fervent lives have nothing but ridicule for the actions of those who are trying to serve God with great fervour and constancy. If, however, we

[1] St. Luke ix. 62.

take any heed of such railleries, or relax in consequence our efforts to acquire virtue and perfection, we are guilty of cowardice, are afraid of what can do us neither good nor harm, and are guilty of gross folly in exposing ourselves to the judgments of God, who bears everything in mind, will judge us justly and without passion, and will repay us generously for everything which we have done or suffered for His sake. Wherefore, if we content and satisfy Him, we need be under no concern about satisfying any one else. It is true that, in our desire to live piously in Jesus Christ, we shall have to suffer hardships and crosses; some persons will be loath to converse with us; others may boycott, many will condemn us as unmannerly and narrow-minded, while to others we may seem gloomy and morose. But we must have a little patience, till we appear before our Judge, and then it will be seen who was in the right and who in the wrong. Let people say what they please; our cause is in good hands when it is in those of God, who sooner or later will give every one his due, according to his works. Whenever, then, we may be tempted to forego our virtuous purposes through human respect, let us remember that we must first study to please and satisfy God, for if He be satisfied, no matter who is dissatisfied.

Third Point.—Thrice happy is he who throughout life pursues the narrow path. Our self-love and often our friends will suggest the necessity of a certain freedom and liberty, in consulting our ease, inclinations, and turn of mind; but to all such suggestions we must pay no heed, for it is certain that the narrow path of strict observance without compromise invariably leads to peace and happiness, although in appearance it seems rugged. Besides which, we have the greatest comfort we can enjoy, namely, the testimony of a good conscience. To be able to say with truth, We serve God, we serve a good Master who loves us, and whom we love, is real happiness, and makes the approach of death an actual pleasure to us.

How great the folly, then, of not conducting ourselves now in such a way as to secure so happy a deliverance

out of this wretched world, so blessed an entrance into our everlasting home.

Let us, finally, renew all our good resolutions, and in our triple colloquy implore the grace to be faithful to them even until death, that so we may secure as our reward an everlasting crown of glory. End with the "Our Father."

CONTEMPLATION FOR OBTAINING DIVINE LOVE.

NOTE.—The object of this exercise is to excite in us a true practical love of God: a love, not confined to words or feelings, but real and effective. For the attainment of this we cannot be better prepared than by the preceding exercises, which have had for their object to attune our soul gradually to that union with God in which our perfection consists. Thus, we were engaged during the first part of the retreat in purging our souls from all the stains of sin, in rooting out every kind of attachment for sin, together with all those affections which are not approved by the teachings of faith and the dictates of right reason: such being quite inconsistent with the love of God our Lord.

When, by God's grace, this had been effected, we were led on to the contemplation of the mysteries of the Life of our Blessed Lord, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and from His teachings and example we learned to follow in His footsteps, to detach ourselves from the world and the things of the world, and to embrace His poverty in spirit and in practice, to mortify ourselves and do violence to all forms of self-love and self-ease, to humble ourselves, and to court humiliations; in a word, to die to ourselves and to the world, that Jesus might live in us. For this end sacrifice is necessary; and being guided by Divine grace, we found in our election what was the special sacrifice required from us, that our imitation of our Lord might be perfected in the state of life to which He has called us.

In the third part, when we contemplated in the mysteries of the terrible Passion of our Lord the sacrifices which His love for us prompted Him to make, we nerved ourselves to strong and fervent resolutions to be faithful in the carrying out of that sacrifice which was the subject of our election and to which the grace of God prompted us.

Finally, in the fourth and last part we drew fresh courage to persevere with holy cheerfulness in the sacrifice of ourselves from the consideration of the reward which our Lord has in store for us: and from the conviction that amid all His joys and glory He does not forget us, but loves us still, and will ever prove our friend, consoling, encouraging, and assisting us by His words and His example. This thought necessarily compels us to love Him in return, and to unite ourselves to Him by the strongest ties of love.

St. Ignatius, before entering upon this meditation, lays down two principles: the *first* of which is that "love is to be estimated by deeds more than by words."

What he states regarding words applies equally to barren and idle affections and mere sentiment; and this is expressed by our Lord when He says: "If you love Me, keep My commandments,"[1] and again by His Apostle, "Let us not love in word or in speech, but in deed and in truth."[2]

The *second* principle is that "love consists in the mutual communication of goods between him who loves and the person beloved by him;" so that one gives to the other that which he has and is capable of bestowing, such as learning, holiness, honour, position, wealth, and the like. It is in this manner that God loves man, and it is thus that man should love God. This principle is approved by reason; for love necessarily involves union, and union cannot be conceived without mutual intercommunication.

We will now apply these principles to the subject of our meditation.

[1] St. John xiv. 15. [2] St. John iii. 18.

Preparatory prayer as usual.

Prelude 1.—Let us place ourselves humbly in the presence of God our Lord, before whom the angels and saints are adoring and interceding for us.[1]

Prelude 2.—Let us beg that which we have at heart, namely, a deep knowledge of the many great gifts bestowed on us by God, and so profound a sense of gratitude as may constrain us in everything and in every circumstance of life, to love and serve His Divine Majesty.

First Point.—That God has satisfied the first principle of this love by giving expression to His great love for man is clear from innumerable passages in the Sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, in which He declares that He loves souls, that His delight is to be with the children of men, that with an everlasting love He hath loved them, that He hath loved us even so as to give Himself up for us, and the rest. But strong as are these professions of love and devotedness, they are as nothing when compared with the deeds by which He has manifested the infinite intensity of His love for each one of us. Let us ponder with deep thought the general benefits of the love which He has bestowed upon us in the orders of nature, of grace, and of glory, how liberally He has imparted to us of those things which He possesses, and how earnestly He also desires to give Himself to us, both here and hereafter.

In the *natural* order He has created the universe, and has filled it with vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual life. He has given to each of us the soul with its powers of memory, understanding, and will; and the body with its several senses. He has provided us with environments in every way favourable for the preservation and development of both the one and the other, and has

[1] Only twice in the Exercises does St. Ignatius propose for a composition of place this solemn and sublime picture of Heaven, which is so well calculated to inspire us with sentiments of awe, courage, confidence, and love. In it we see God, His angels, and the whole company of the saints, along with her who is the Queen of Saints, all manifesting their loving kindness and interest in our regard.

saved us from the countless bodily and spiritual infirmities which we daily see and witness in others. He has placed us in most favourable relations with the animate and inanimate world, by which we are surrounded, and which ministers to our use, or pleasure, or necessities.

To this benefit of creation we must add also the gift of conservation, by which, in each successive moment of existence, all those favours of creation are renewed and made more perfect. Through how many stages have those creatures passed which we use, as food and clothing, how many hands have been sustained and employed in adapting them to our use, for our special benefit, and for our preservation? Oh, what wonderful providence, what incomprehensible love on the part of God! for all these things were foreseen and specially provided by the wisdom and goodness of God, and were specially willed in His love for us. In the "Foundation" we meditated on all these creatures as so many means conducting us to our end, and teaching us the use which we ought to make of them; but now we consider them as so many presents from God, in token of His singular love for us.

If we turn from the natural to the *supernatural* order, there opens out to us another and a new world, a boundless ocean of gifts and graces. For us God gave His only and well-beloved Son;[1] Jesus Christ gave His own Blood, His Life, His whole self;[2] and the Holy Spirit poured His Divine love into our hearts. God became Man, that we might become God. He imparted to us His doctrine, His merits, and His example, He gave us His Mother to be our Mother also; the life-giving sacraments too; and to these we may add those special graces by which every hour of our individual life has been marked.

Lastly, He has prepared for us an eternal weight of glory, in which we shall enjoy never-ending happiness and peace and the possession of Himself. The greatness of these gifts is enhanced when we consider who it is

[1] St. John iii. 13. [2] 1 Timothy ii. 6.

that gives them to us, who those are to whom they are given, and for what end they have been bestowed upon us. Truly the mind is lost in amazement at the countless ways in which God has given Himself to us and continues to spend Himself upon us, as St. Augustine says, *Totus Christus impensus est in nostros usus.*

If we ask ourselves, what conclusion we should draw from all this? How we ought to respond to it? St. Ignatius puts this answer into our mouths: "*Sume*, take, since all is *from* Thee, all belongs *to* Thee, all is *for* Thee, because whatever I have Thou hast given it, and it is Thine still. Take, for what is there which I can refuse Thee, and who am I that I should refuse Thee? Take, Thou that knowest well how mean and remiss I am, and how I can offer nothing as I ought. *Sume et suscipe*, yet deign to accept, O Lord, for in Thy goodness and royal generosity Thou art pleased to accept as a gift from me that which is Thine already—*universam meam libertatem*—all my liberty, which includes my whole self; accept me as Thy poor and unworthy bondslave, who has no claims, no rights of his own, but is absolutely and in all things dependent on his Master's good pleasure: *sume et suscipe*, my memory, my understanding, and my will. I consent to be deprived of these my faculties if Thou judgest it in any way useful to Thy glory, and to be reduced to the state of the animal creation—*quibus non est intellectus.*

"Whatever I have is Thy free gift, Thou alone art the sovereign Lord and absolute Master of my soul and body, and of all that appertains to me, whether in actual possession or in prospect; and to Thee, by the power which Thou hast granted me, I freely give them back again. *Dispone*, do Thou vouchsafe to dispose of them according to Thy good pleasure, without any regard to me or to my will.

"My only wish and desire, the one thing I humbly crave to have, is *amorem tui solum et gratiam*, the grace to love Thee and to love Thee alone, and then I shall be rich indeed. This is my only wish, and beyond that I

ask for nothing more; and this I humbly crave inasmuch and as far as Thou dost will it."

We have here a most perfect offering and the sublimest act of love which we can make, whether we consider *what* we give, the *manner* in which we give it, or the *motive* for which it is given, namely, out of the purest love. If this act comes from the heart in all sincerity, in how happy a condition it places us! Who can measure the varied graces which will follow from it, though in the act itself we make neither these graces nor our own self-interest the motive in any way? From how many miseries, anxieties, and doubtful desires, springing from self-love, will it not deliver us!

Second Point.—When an earthly monarch wishes to make a present to any of his subjects he causes it to be carried to him; and when once it has been delivered, he takes no further trouble about it; but it is not thus that God treats us. He gives His gifts to us in Person, for He actually abides in them, and is constantly renewing them, both in the order of nature and of grace.

The presence of God in all His favours to us increases their value to us immeasurably. He is present in them by His essence, by His power, and in just persons by His grace. In the vegetable order He is giving life; in the animal creation, life and feeling; in man, life, feeling, and understanding. He is present to keep them from falling back into the nothing from which He has extracted them, for otherwise they would instantly be annihilated; He is present to enable them to act, and concurs in the effects of their every action; in Him we live, and move, and have our being.[1]

According to the order of grace He is present in the Eucharist, wherein He continues the works of His mortal life, and His Incarnation is expanded and brought home to each of us. He is present in our souls, adorning them ever with fresh beauty. With what sentiments of love and gratitude should our souls be inflamed, with what generosity should we offer ourselves up to God; and with

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

what respect should we make use of all things in order not to employ them against the will of Him who dwells in them.

Here let us, with all the earnestness of our souls, renew the offering which we made at the end of the first point.

Third Point.—Let us further ponder how in all creatures God is working, so to speak, for our individual sakes, whether in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, animals, &c., concurring with them immediately or mediately: in the sun and the heavenly bodies, in the clouds, in the air, the waters, in the growth of plants, ripening of fruits, propagation and development of animals, &c., in the feeding, circulation, digestion of our bodies, in providing us with clothing and dwellings. So, too, in the order of grace. Nay, He concurs with each one of us in our acts. This thought should incite us to avail ourselves of His concurrence *solely* for His glory, and not out of self-love or for the gratification of our passions.

Fourth Point.—Let us consider how all good gifts descend from above, and how God is the principle of everything which exists, and how in Him are contained, in an eminent degree, all those perfections which we find existing in creatures. Thus the varied forms of beauty in nature are but faint reflections of the infinite beauty of the Divinity; the vast expanse of the heavens and of the ocean are merely dim shadows of the immensity of God; the science, skill, and other intellectual qualities, together with the moral attributes of mankind, are but partial representations of Him who is the Infinite and thrice Holy. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights,"[1] just as rays do from the sun, or the stream from its source.

The world is like a book written by the finger of God, and the creatures that exist in the world are, as it were, types by which the perfections of its Author are faintly and imperfectly illustrated. We should then regard

[1] St. James i. 17.

all things as reminders to us of God. They each have a tongue telling us of His glory, they each have a finger pointing up towards their Author, and thus they furnish a means by which we may ascend up to Him. What fools we are then to attach ourselves to creatures for themselves and for their own sake, and thus pervert them from the end for which they were created; and, instead of employing them to lead us to God, make use of them actually to withdraw us and alienate us from Him.

Let us repent of our past folly in this respect, and let us again make the offering, *Sume Domine et suscipe.* Let us also beg our ever-Blessed Mother and the saints, especially those of our holy Society, and the angels likewise, to intercede for us that we may never again be guilty of withdrawing the holocaust which we have made of ourselves to God our Lord.

RULES FOR THINKING WITH THE CHURCH.

These rules were drawn up by St. Ignatius with the object of guarding the true children of the Church from the errors of the self-styled Reformers of the sixteenth century, and of protecting them against the pernicious influence of those innovators who denounced not only the dogmas of the Church, but also her ritual, her ceremonies, and her holy practices. They are, however, as applicable to, and as needful for those who are living now at the close of the nineteenth century, as they were at the time at which they were written. For though the phases of Protestantism have been constantly undergoing transformation, still its spirit remains the same: there is the same rejection of divinely constituted authority, the same insistence on the principle of private judgment, and the same substitution of reason in place of supernatural and Divine faith. The influence of Protestantism, whether considered politically, socially, or as affecting the

individual, has been far-reaching and disastrous, because it flatters the passions, promotes a spirit of pride and false independence, and gives its sanction to self-ease and indulgence in material comforts. Therefore we cannot be surprised that under all its forms it displays an inveterate hatred and antagonism to the Church of Christ, whose office is to teach and maintain the principles of its Founder, the doctrine of the Cross and of mortification, the necessity of humility and submission to the authority which He has constituted, and which is centred in His Vicar upon earth. Now, as in the early days of Protestantism, the children of the Catholic Church are exposed to no small danger of being tainted by the false maxims of a religion which permits and fosters the cravings of poor human nature, and it is to counteract so great a danger that these rules are recommended to us. They are not meant to comprise a summary of dogmatic truth, but they summarize the true Catholic spirit, which, alas! owing to the Protestant atmosphere we are condemned to breathe, seems to be on the wane. It is this spirit which we are bound to manifest and to promote by boldly upholding those main features of a truly Christian life, which were so violently denounced by Luther and his followers.

I. Laying aside all private judgment, we ought to keep our minds prepared and ready to obey in all things our holy Mother, the Hierarchical Church, which is the true spouse of Christ.

Our Lord chose it for His eternal and immaculate spouse, gave to it His Spirit, and promised to be with it all days, to preserve and support it. Whoever, then, opposes the Church is an enemy of Christ, and must be regarded as "a heathen and a publican," because he opposes that which is "the pillar and ground of truth,"[1] "against which the gates of Hell shall never prevail."[2]

II. We must approve and commend confession made to a priest and the reception of the Most

[1] 1 Timothy iii. 15. [2] St. Matt. xvi. 18.

Blessed Sacrament at least once a year: indeed every month, and better still every eighth day, provided it be done with the requisite and fitting dispositions. As regards this rule, we may learn what is the spirit of the Church from the Council of Trent, which declares that "Jesus Christ wished this Sacrament to be taken as the Food of our souls, that they may be nourished and strengthened by the Life of Him who said: 'He that eateth Me shall live by Me,' and that we may have an antidote to the harm engendered by our daily faults and be preserved from mortal sin."

St. Ambrose puts this well when he says: "I should always receive in order that I may be healed from my sins, and as I am always sinning, I should always have my medicine."

Further, the Tridentine Fathers add: "This holy Synod would urge that at every Mass the faithful who assist should communicate not only spiritually, but also sacramentally."[1]

Innocent XI. decreed that "frequent Communion should be left to the judgment of confessors, who, guided by the purity of conscience, the fruits, and progress of their penitents in piety, were to decide what would best promote their salvation in their several states of life."

The same Pope admonishes pastors having care of souls "not to debar the faithful from frequent or even daily Communion."

St. Charles Borromeo prescribes that his clergy shall exhort the faithful *quam frequentissime*—"to frequent Communion," and threatens with suspension any priest or preacher who shall either directly or indirectly advise the contrary.

Alexander VII. condemns the proposition, "Those are to be excluded from Holy Communion, in whom there is not most pure love of God, free from all imperfection."

[1] From this it would appear that it were well if the piety and devotion of the faithful led some of those present at Mass to approach the altar and receive Holy Communion.

St. Basil says: "It is good and most useful to communicate daily, and to partake of the Holy Body and Blood of Christ."

St. Ambrose: "If It is daily Bread, why do you take It only once a year? Take daily what is of daily profit to the soul, and so live that you may be daily worthy to receive."

III. We must approve and commend the frequent hearing of Mass; the keeping of choir and consecration of some time to prayer, as well in church as at home; also the recitation of the Divine Office and the Canonical Hours at the times appointed.

IV. We must approve and hold in high esteem Religious Orders, the states of virginity and continency, being careful not to praise the married state as much as any of these.

V. We must approve the taking of religious vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, and also vows to perform other works of perfection and supererogation. And here it is to be observed that as a vow appertains only to the things which regard Evangelical perfection, it cannot be taken in respect of actions or states of life which do not come under this head, such as matrimony, merchandise, and the like.

VI. We must approve of the relics of the saints and show reverence to them, and must also pray to those whose relics they are. We must, moreover, uphold stations, pilgrimages, Indulgences, Jubilees, and the use of lighted candles in the church.

VII. We must approve the commandments of the Church regarding fasting and abstinence, such as the laws of Lent, of the Ember-days, certain vigils, and of the Fridays throughout the year; likewise the teaching and practice of internal and exterior penance.

VIII. We must approve of the building and decoration of churches, as well as the making of images, and must venerate them through our appreciation of what they represent.

The preceding rules are calculated to form in us

a high esteem and great fervour in the practice of such works of piety and exercises of devotion as are approved by the Church; and we must be convinced that they will produce great fruit in all who adopt them, and will serve to preserve and propagate the faith, besides securing the rewards attached to them respectively. If we conscientiously observe them, our lives become a constant and living protest against the heretics of our day, and serve as a reproach to those liberal Catholics who have imbibed the spirit of the times and are inclined to make light of such things, even though closely allied to the spirit of the Church and consecrated by venerable antiquity, besides being approved by the practice and teaching of the saints.

IX. We must accept and approve all the precepts of the Church, be ever ready to vindicate and defend them, and careful to avoid impugning or condemning them.

X. We ought to be very ready to approve and praise the statutes and recommendations as well as the actions of Superiors and of those who have gone before us; for even though they may sometimes have been less praiseworthy, still to denounce them openly from the pulpit, or before the uninstructed, would give scandal and would do no good, but might excite discontent and dislike of former rulers, whether in temporal or spiritual matters. It might, however, be useful to touch on such subjects to those who have it in their power to remedy any point that is blameworthy in Superiors, or is calculated to cause scandal in others.

St. Cyprian, speaking of his own times, says that heresies and schisms are the outcome of disobedience, murmuring, and contempt on the part of subjects in regard of their ecclesiastical Superiors, and that he who maintains inviolable the authority of prelates, extirpates all errors by the roots. That spirit which ignores the ordinations of Superiors, canvasses their conduct, and disregards their opinions, betrays men into professing their own judgments, setting them up in opposition, and

so at length falling away. It was thus with Luther, and with all the first self-styled Reformers.

XI. We must approve of the Positive and Scholastic methods of teaching theology: according to the first we are instructed to love God our Lord in all things, and to give ourselves up with all affection to His service, as we read in the writings of St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the other Fathers; in the second, the works of St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and the Master of Sentences, teach us how to define accurately and lucidly the truths necessary for eternal salvation, while they prepare us for exposing and refuting the errors and false arguments of the present day. This the Scholastics do because they are of more recent date and are excellently versed in the true interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures and in the writings of the holy Fathers, and are at the same time specially enlightened and guided by God, besides being helped by the decrees of the Councils and by the canons and constitutions of our holy mother the Church. From this we detect the reason of the inveterate hostility which the new teachers and their successors bear towards Scholastic Theology.

XII. We must be careful not to draw invidious comparisons between persons now living and the saints departed, as for example, were we to call a man more learned than St. Augustine, or a greater saint than St. Francis, and the like.

XIII. In order to guard ourselves against all error we must always be ready to maintain that what may seem to us to be white is really black if the Church declares it to be so, since we are thoroughly persuaded that between Christ our Lord and His spouse the Holy Catholic Church there is one and the same spirit which governs and directs us to the salvation of our souls; and that our holy mother the Church is guided and ruled by the same spirit as our Lord who gave to us the Ten Commandments, and consequently is infallible in all those things which pertain to matters of faith or morals.

XIV. Though it is most true that no one can be

saved unless he be predestined and have faith and grace, yet we must be very careful in our manner of speaking and treating of all this subject.

This is most necessary, lest in over-estimating the efficacy of predestination and grace we unduly detract from the power and efforts of free-will, or lest by allowing too much to free-will we derogate from the grace of God, without which all supernatural acts would be impossible.

XV. We must not make a practice of often discussing the question of predestination, and if we on some occasions and to a certain extent introduce the subject, let this be done in such a way that common people may not be led into any mistake, as sometimes happens when they say: "It has already been decided whether I am to be saved or lost, and whether my works be bad or good there cannot now be any other result." Thus it is that the tepid and indifferent neglect good works which conduce to salvation and to the spiritual profit of their souls.

XVI. It frequently happens also that by unduly dwelling upon and extolling faith, without any distinction or explanation, occasion is given to persons to become slothful and remiss in good works.

The Council of Trent,[1] interpreting the words of St. Paul,[2] "we account a man to be justified by faith, without the works of the law," pronounces it to be the perpetual teaching of the Catholic Church that "we are said to be justified by faith, inasmuch as faith is the beginning of salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and be numbered among His children. We are said to be justified *gratis*, because none of the things which precede justification, such as faith or good works, can merit it." Later, in the eleventh chapter of the same session, after establishing the necessity of good works, it adds, "Let no one then delude himself into supposing that by faith

[1] Sess. vi. c. 8.

[2] Romans iii. 28; Galat. ii. 17; Ephes. ii. 8.

alone he becomes heir of God and secures his inheritance."

XVII. Likewise, we must not so speak of grace as to seem to detract from man's liberty; nor in these dangerous times may we speak of faith and of grace to the detriment of good works and free-will, as if we esteemed the latter to be of no account.

The Council of Trent declares: "The beginning of justification in adults is derived from God through Jesus Christ by preventing grace, that is, through the vocation whereby they are called, without any existing merit of their own, so that though turned away from God by sin, they are disposed, by His grace awakening and helping them, to turn to their justification, by their free assent and co-operation with that grace. So that when God by His illuminations touches man's soul, man also acts by accepting it when he could have rejected it, not however that he could of his own free-will and without the grace of God move himself to justification. And therefore we read in Scripture, 'Be converted unto Me and I will be converted to you,'[1] whereby, we are reminded of our liberty; and again we are taught the preventing grace of God in those other words: 'Convert us, O Lord, unto Thee and we shall be converted.'"[2]

XVIII. Although it is above all things praiseworthy greatly to serve our Lord out of pure love, yet we ought greatly to praise the fear of His Divine Majesty, because not only is filial fear a pious and most holy thing, but even servile fear, when one cannot rise to anything better and more useful, is of great help to him to escape from mortal sin; and after he has escaped from it, he easily attains to filial fear, which is altogether acceptable and pleasing to God our Lord, because it is inseparable from Divine love.

In the Scriptures we have innumerable passages in praise of the fear of God. As for instance, "The fear of the Lord driveth out sin. For he that is without fear

[1] Zach. i. 3. [2] Lam. v. 21.

cannot be justified."[1] Again, it is said to "confer peace and the fruits of salvation, to dilate the heart and bring joy and gladness."[2] It is the "beginning of wisdom," and also "the crown and fulness of wisdom." It is to obtain this that holy David prays, "Pierce my flesh with Thy fear." Our Lord Himself counsels it, *Timete eum qui potest et animam et corpus perdere in gehennam.*

According then to these rules we may come to learn how far we are influenced in our judgments and in our conduct by the true Christian and Catholic spirit, and this is one grand result of the Spiritual Exercises when properly made.

We may test our spirit of *faith* and *obedience* to the Church by the first, ninth, and thirteenth rules. We may further judge what effects they produce upon our conduct by the manner in which we assist at the *rites* and *ceremonies* of Holy Church and make use of the *sacraments*, according to the second, third, and eighth rules. We may test our *conformity* to her discipline, and to her sentiments with regard to *Religious Orders* by the seventh, fourth, and fifth rules; our submission to civil authorities by the tenth rule; our appreciation of her methods of teaching by the eleventh rule, also our orthodoxy in regard of predestination, grace, faith, and good works; and lastly as concerns the utility of filial fear of God by the rules between numbers fourteen and eighteen.

In compiling these rules, St. Ignatius evidently had before his mind the detractors of Holy Church, such as Luther, Calvin, and Jansenius, and their public errors; and wished to make their principles clearly known so that the children of the Church might shun them and avoid being misled by them.

[1] Eccles. i. 27, 28. [2] Eccles. i. 12.

APPENDIX I.

SUBJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION WHICH MAY FURNISH MATTER FOR ELECTION AND REFORMATION OF OUR STATE OF LIFE, AND ARE USEFUL FOR ALL.

In the following Appendices, various subjects are considered as calculated to help us in making our election and in reforming our lives. They are not necessarily to be used as they stand, but may be selected according to the requirements of the person or time. For as it would be inexpedient to drug a sick man with all kinds of medicine, instead of giving him such only as are likely to restore him to health, so the subject-matter of our election and of our resolutions must be determined by the different states of our soul.

1. Not unfrequently during the course of the afternoon, in place of a regular meditation, which might be inconvenient and too fatiguing, the consideration of some practical subject bearing on our daily life and duties is substituted. Two great advantages recommend this practice, for in the first place it helps us to gain a more intimate knowledge of ourselves, and in the second it provides us with a number of points on which we may employ the methods of election, to our great spiritual profit.

2. The subjects chosen ought to be of a decidedly practical nature, and should consequently be adapted to the state of life of the exercitant.

3. They are to be fixed by him who gives the Exer-

cises, as being able to judge which are best adapted to the dispositions of the person under his charge.

4. Under this head additional notes and documents from the pen of Father Clare will be found inserted in the order indicated by him for the further development of his subjects, doubtless with the intention of a subsequent edition, which has now been carried out.

1.—Further considerations and meditations useful in making the Exercises—the teaching of these compared with that of the Institute.

The fifth *Annotation* draws the attention of the exercitant to the great importance of the ascetic principle of liberality towards God. Institute, P. iii. c. i. n. 22, and Rule XIX.

Additions.

As these contain certain minute practices for the better making of the Exercises, &c., so also in the Institute we find similar aids which frequently produce important effects, *e.g.*, some of the "Common Rules," the "Rules of Modesty," &c. In both Exercises and Institute the principle is inculcated that nothing can be considered trivial in the service of God, and also that the observance of small things requires considerable self-abnegation and is a means of gaining great merit and advance in solid virtue.

THE FOUNDATION.

1. In the Exercises, man is created to promote the *external glory of God*, and thus save his soul. In the Institute, the Society is formed to promote *the greater glory of God* both *intensively* and *extensively*, and to *perfect the soul of each of its members*, as also to *procure* the *salvation* and *perfection* of as *many others* as *possible*.

2. All things also are means for this end, and are therefore to be used *tantum quantum*, consequently it behoves man to act as if indifferent, &c. This indif-

ference has its degrees both of *intensity* and *extension*. In the Institute more is required, inasmuch as we seek the *greater* glory of God both intensively and extensively.

FIRST WEEK.

The scope of this week of the Exercises is *purity of conscience*, (α) by means of examens, (β) by general and ordinary confession, (γ) by use of penances, (δ) by acquiring a horror of sin, detestation of inordinate affections, and a keen sense of the vanity of the world, as the fruit of meditation.

In the Institute (Exam. c. iv. n. 41) we are taught to cultivate continual increase of purity of conscience and of the practice of solid virtues, by help of examens of conscience (general and particular twice a day), by general confessions twice a year, and ordinary confessions once a week at first, twice as priests, by penances and daily meditation.

SECOND WEEK.

1. The Foundation of the rest of the Exercises is laid in "The Kingdom of Christ." This Kingdom is the Church in which are the two states, comprising those who follow the common life, and those who ambition to distinguish themselves in the warfare against our *internal* enemies—*sensuality*, *carnal and worldly love*, and who also in *some way* join the care of their *own salvation* with *that* of the *salvation of others*. Moreover, amongst these latter will be found those who are more ambitious still and who are anxious to act not only on the defensive, but on the *offensive* also; if Christ should be pleased to call them to it. In this we have that picture of the Society which as Father Gonzales heard from St. Ignatius, had been communicated to him by God as its ideal (Lancic. *De Præst. Instit.;* conf. also Regg, xi. to xii. and formula of vows). In these contemplations Christ is in a special manner the Exemplar of St. Ignatius.

2. The "Two Standards" is a continuation of the "Kingdom of Christ": in the latter soldiers are found and internal enemies are considered, &c.: in the former soldiers drawn out of the fight, and are instructed in the cunning ways of their enemy and the means by which they can defeat them, and instruct others to do the same. This also was communicated by God (as St. Ignatius told Rev. Father Everard Mercurian; conf. Lancicius, *De Præst. Instit.* c. i. n. 7). Dux amabilis = spiritus suavitatis Societatis. Hum = humilitas et paupertas Soc. . . . hostility to the Society as shown by the enemies of Christ and of His Church.

3. The Society desires all its members to be of the third class, all to aim at the third degree of humility, and to use methods of election, especially in retreats and triduos.

THIRD WEEK.

The Passion of Christ, represented in the Society as "fighting under the Standard of the Cross."

1. Christ instituted SS. Sacrament: to which the Society has a special devotion, inculcating frequent visits, regularity in Mass and Communions, besides recommendation of the practice of frequent Communions.

2. Christ suffers exquisite torments—opprobrium and contumely, as also does the Society in these respects.

FOURTH WEEK.

Documents.

1. Methods of Prayer. Much used in the Society.

2. Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (conf. Annot. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15).

3. Of Distribution of Alms (conf. Exam. civ. nn. 1, 2, 3).

4. On Scruples—Rules 5 and 6, are comprised in Reg. Sum. 14.

5. Rules of Conformity with the Church, are essentially connected with the spirit of the Society.

1.—ON DEATH AS THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

(*α*) Death is the punishment which affects us inevitably and most nearly.

(*β*) Two points occur in this consideration—one, the universal attitude of mankind at the thought of death; the other, the sight of the dying man, often the prey of sadness, anguish, and suffering.

Prelude 1.—Imagine yourself condemned to death.

Prelude 2.—Beg grace to learn the lesson taught by Death, "the good counsellor."

First Point.—According to Scripture[1] and the Fathers of the Church, from Adam's fall come all our misfortunes and disasters. Every generation of man hears echoing in its ears the cry *morte morieris*. The lower animals sprung from the earth are ignorant of it, and go on till the last knowing nothing about it! Man alone, whether in joy or sorrow, cannot shut his eyes nor close his ears to it. It is the intimate, universal, abiding conviction of every man that death is a *penalty*, and did not enter into the primal plan of creation and providence of God. Though to the man of faith, to him who loves God, it becomes a deliverance and a blessing, yet in its natural aspect, it is a sad enigma to his *intellect*, a sombre and gloomy object to his *imagination*, a bitter derision confronting his *will*, a rending of his *heart*, a torment of his *body*—it casts a shadow over his brow and stays the smile on his lips. It acts as a terrible phantom before the mind of *youth*, of *manhood*, and even of *old age;* it is a sad ghost in the family circle, haunting children, husband, and wife.

Scripture.—Psalm liv. 5: "The fear of death is fallen upon me, fear and trembling are come upon me and darkness hath covered me." Psalm xvii. 5: "The sorrows of death surrounded me, and the torrents of iniquity troubled me." Romans v. 12: "As by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin, death; so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned." St. James

[1] Genesis i. 17.

i. 15: "Sin when it is completed begetteth death." Romans vi. 23: "The wages of sin is death."

The Church in her worship, sacraments, prayers, &c., teaches that death is a punishment. Jesus in and by His death inculcates the same truth.

Second Point.—The sight of a man dying (if he be not a holy man), proves death to be a punishment. Let us take an ordinary case.

(*α*) State of the soul. It looks at the *past.* What bitter regrets! every illusion melts away; life is a mockery with its feasts, &c. If the soul could only begin again! *Sed venit finis.*

It looks at the *present.* What remorse, at the sad sight of the whole past life, &c.! *Opera tua sumus, non te derelinquemur.*

It looks towards the *future.* What terror and dismay at the fearful uncertainty!

(*β*) The state of the heart.—Its separation, from every *thing,* from every *person:* and that separation is entire, no *au revoir,* it is for ever! separation from house and lands and home, from all pleasures, all companions, all kindred, all friends.

(*γ*) The state of the body.—How great and many its pains! the senses gradually failing—extremities growing cold, the tongue scarcely able to move, the body become like a victim vainly gasping for breath! hope is now all over! We next follow that body to the grave—and oh, what a sight is there!

2.—ON DEATH AS A PASSAGE INTO ETERNITY.

We are all condemned to die; the hour and manner of execution we do not know—but we are sure that the time fixed cannot be far off.

Prelude 1.—Imagine body being carried to grave.

Prelude 2.—Let us beg, &c.

First Point.—I am *hurrying* towards *death* and *eternity. Ibit homo in domum æternitatis suæ.*[1] An inevitable eternity

[1] Eccles. xii. 5.

is waiting to absorb me, whence there is no escape, no going back of the waters of life. The cry is ever *onward*, ever *forward;* in sleep, in pleasures, &c. I am moving along, despite the noise and excitement of the world trying to drown the thought and hide from me the reality. Picture of raft laden with many alluring objects drifting to the rocks that skirt the ocean.

Second Point.—This *sea* of *eternity* is close at hand. Time hides its swift flight by the quick succession of day after day, blinding our eyes to the shortness of time and the rapid approach of eternity.

Scripture describes time as: "a hurrying messenger,"[1] "a bird passing thro' the air,"[2] as "an arrow from the bow,"[3] as "but a shadow,"[4] as "a thin froth,"[5] and as "smoke,"[6] as "a flower,"[7] &c.

What more could God say to convince us of the shortness of life?

The *world* testifies to the same. *Fili hominis quid vides?* I see four generations of men hurrying on each other's heels—old men, men in prime, young men, boys —calling one to the other, "Push on! make way! room!" How many *fall out* in the forced march along the lines of literature, science, statecraft, army, navy, &c.; others rise to the top and then disappear, and where in truth are they? We are but as passengers by a limited mail.

Third Point.—Eternity touches upon the present life and may swallow us up at any moment, so that we are in danger of dying in any state of *soul*, any *place*, and any *situation* or *action!* Such occasions might easily be, for example, a theatre on fire or excursion train wrecked, &c. We are walking on the brink of an abyss and may fall over any minute. How many sudden deaths occur under all sorts of circumstances within a single day! What rash madness then in any one to put off conversion even for an hour, if we are in sin, when the consequences must be so awful.

[1] Wisdom v. 9. [2] Wisdom v. 11. [3] Wisdom v. 12. [4] Job viii. 9. [5] Wisdom v. 15. [6] Wisdom v. 15. [7] Job xiv. 2.

3.—ON THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

(*a*) This is necessary for the vindication of God's providence in regard of mankind; (*β*) as also for man it is a protection of life and preservation of society.

Prelude 1.—"It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment."[1]

Prelude 2.—Beg grace to understand this mystery.

First Point.—The *anticipation* of having to be publicly judged causes us great suffering, it fills us with terrible fear, viewed in the light of Faith, of reason, and of conscience—more especially seeing that the Judge is all-wise, holy, just, and powerful; and it is pronounced before the whole court of Heaven, of Earth, and of Hell!

Yet how much more awful will be its *reality!* Now this judgment or exposition of God's action in regard of each individual is necessary in order that God's justice may be vindicated, and that reparation may be made for all the crimes, injustices, and scandals committed. "God shall judge both the just and the wicked, and then shall be the time of everything."[2] In the *duel* between *truth* and *error*, between *good* and *evil*, between *order* and *disorder*, the former often seem to be worsted. "Thou, O Lord, art just. Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?"[3] Wait a while—the end will come, justice will be vindicated.

(*a*) Such hidden crimes as calumny, sacrilege, lust, seduction, &c., must be exposed! as also will hidden virtues, humility, purity, and the like be brought to light.

(*β*) The judgment of men, which considers good as evil and evil as good, has to be rectified, in the social and the political world. So that man shall then exclaim, "Thou art just, O Lord: and Thy judgment is right."[4]

Second Point.—This judgment is necessary for the security of the individual life, as a *stimulus* to do good and a check to the evildoer; it gives *strength* to resist and

[1] Hebrews ix. 27. [2] Eccles. iii. 17. [3] Jerem. xii. 1.
[4] Psalm cxviii. 137.

overcome our natural weakness—everybody dreads to be condemned, seeks for approval. Saints seek approval of God and despise judgment of world, which, of course, condemns them—*Mihi pro minimo*, &c.[1] *Nos insensati*,[2] &c. Judgments of world counteracted by the judgment of the Great Tribunal, which is eternal—*Reposita est hæc spes in sinu meo.*

Pagans used this dogma to prevent crimes. When we think of the nature of the Judge, *matter* of the judgment, public exposure, and quality of the sentence, what horror seizes upon one. The same is necessary for the good of society.

4.—THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

(*a*) What the *nature* of it? How great pain, anguish, shame, and terror to the wicked—*Quantus tremor est futurus*, &c.—the *antecedents* of it will cause men to wither away through fear, &c.

Prelude 1.—Imagine Judge, angels, &c.

Pretude 2.—*Confige timore tuo carnes meas.*

First Point.—Terror at the MANIFESTATION made by it.[3] In this life what horror of being found out—then will be disclosed *each one*, and *everything*, *before everybody*—clever plotters, criminals, unjust, impure, hypocrites, liars, and false friends, &c.—(*Quidquid latet apparebit*) *number*, *species*, *gravity* (*quidquid*) and will be published to *men*, angels, and devils, who will all then fully appreciate sin, its malice, meanness, &c. If the terror of the confessional be now so great, what will it be then! First the Judge —*Ecce Homo;* next, all men will hear and consent to the sentence, even the partner of one's guilt!

Second Point.—The *accusation*. If we have not accused ourselves in the tribunal of penance, what will it be then? *Judge*, almighty, just, powerful, as contrasted with earthly judges. *Witnesses*, persons, creatures, places, circum-

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 3. [2] Wisdom v. 4. [3] 2 Cor. v. 10.

stances, angels, devils, conscience—*none* to plead your cause—NOT ONE to say you are innocent—*quem patronum rogaturus, cum vix justus sit securus.*

Third Point.—The *sentence.* In the confessional sin might have been pardoned, but now the glory of God demands the annihilation of all evil and supreme triumph of the good. God will close every mouth then—*erit dies Domini.* All will cry out for justice and condemnation. *Ite! maledicti!*—you refused My numberless mercies—you spurned My infinite love. Behold My justice—*Revelabitur justitia sicut torrens fortis*—in the final separation of wives from husbands, parents from children, of the evil from the good.

5.—THE DESTINY OF HUMAN LIFE.

Of all questions that should occupy the mind this is the first and foremost.

Its consideration should be the pre-occupation of our whole life.

In it lies our chief responsibility. Why do I exist? What is the end of my life?

This should be ever in my thoughts, actively and keenly occupying my mind.

It is to my life what sun is to the plants, it is my guiding star on the sea of life, and yet it is ignored by men. Go and inquire of the passing crowd—one man will answer you in one way and another in another, but all will regard you as a fool. *Desolatione desolata est terra.*

I. The thought of our last end alone leads us to the full truth—life is true only on this condition. Without it there is falsehood in the intellect—in the heart, in the will; falsehood in our desires, ambitions, amusements, &c. "We have erred from the way of truth, and the

light of justice hath not shined upon us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us."[1]

II. This thought alone gives us for guidance in our multiplied and varied actions, unity of motive, — the love of God: unity of intention—God's glory; unity of end—God Himself. This is easily seen. No matter how different the states or conditions of men, herein is that which St. Augustine calls the *splendor ordinis;* in contradistinction to that wasted life which holy Job described as "a land which is dark and covered with the mist of death; a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth."[2]

III. It is a thought of most profound wisdom, it impels us to adopt the only means that are suited to our end, whereas those who will not think of these things act like fools.[3]

IV. It is a thought which enables us to form a conception of true greatness, the adaptation, viz., of all things to that ultimate end of life, which as being the Infinite and the Eternal sanctifies and ennobles the humblest duties, while it appraises at their true value the lesser aims of the statesman, the soldier, the man of science.

V. The thought of this highest end of man imparts to our actions that force and power which inspire us with courage to undertake, and constancy and perseverance in bringing our work to a definite issue; whereas a mere personal and earthly end involves constant discouragement and disappointment, preventing our either beginning or continuing to the end aright.

VI. The placing of so high an aim before us secures and preserves to us that true moral liberty of mind without which we become the slaves of endless secondary motives, such as riches, honour, pleasures, and the like.

VII. This establishes our souls in true peace and happiness, while any other end proposed to ourselves

[1] Wisdom v. 6; Isaias liii. 6; Psalm xiii.
[2] Job x. 21, 22. [3] Wisdom v. 1—9.

brings us only misery, with the false cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace,"[1] it even enables us to accept willingly the sufferings and sorrows of this life.

VIII. Without this end in view we are but little different from the animals, which have no knowledge of their beginning or end.

Therefore, with the torch of faith in your right hand, and of reason in your left, and having your eyes fixed on the eternal end before you, *Intende, prospere, procede, et regnabis.*

6.—MAN'S END NOT IN TIME, NOR ON EARTH.

Surgite et ite, hic enim non est vobis requies.[2] (*a*) That my life has a distinct and definite end is certain. But where? In what sort of world? Visible or invisible? Free-thinkers, materialists, naturalists, positivists, worldlings, fondly hope that the final end is dissolution, and so try to drown the voice of conscience with the refrain of the sensualists of Judah 3,000 years ago. "Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered, let no meadow escape our riot. Let none of us go without his part in luxury, let us everywhere leave tokens of joy, for this is our portion, this is our lot."[3] But even good persons and religious try sometimes to compromise, forgetting that an inordinate affection for the things of earth and time are inconsistent with their end.

Prelude 1.—"Arise ye and depart, there is no rest here for you."

Prelude 2.—Root out seeds of inordinate attachments and fix your mind and heart on the eternal years.

First Point.—Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament, insists that our *end* is not here.[4] They counsel us not to lay up treasures on earth; teach that those who

[1] Jerem. vi. 14.

[2] Micheas ii. 10. [3] Wisdom ii. 8. [4] St. Matt. vi.; St. Luke xi.

give themselves up to earthly cares will be suddenly awakened and will find their hands empty,[1] *non habemus hic*, &c.[2] *Duty* of man, of every man, of the whole man is that we should "fear God and keep His commandments, for this is all man."[3] Jesus declares that His children are "not of this world," and must not love either it or the things which are in it. "If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him."[4]

Second Point.—The Church inculcates the same; all her great and good men have acted on it. In proportion as they detached themselves from the world, they considered that they had secured their end; nay, they sacrificed the world altogether, giving up life for the sake of that end; the apostles, martyrs, virgins, and confessors in every country, age, sex, and condition, gave up freedom, honours, pleasures, riches, comforts, embracing poverty, pain, privation, penance, contempt, persecution, in pursuance of their end.

Third Point.—Reason itself, guided by grace, approves and inculcates the same.

(*a*) Nature demands an end *fixed* and *unalterable;* but this cannot be in time or on earth. Nature itself is never still; man physically and morally is subject to the same law: in infancy, youth, manhood, old age; his family increases, decreases, disappears too, society *nunquam in eodem statu permanet.* Yet in an invincible aspiration for a fixed permanent state, his mind aspires to truth unchangeable, his heart to a love that will not change, nor be taken from it.

(*β*) This end must be, *complete, entire, full*, for "nature abhors a vacuum;" mind, heart, and every faculty of the soul abhor a void. But all things of time and earth are finite, they have in them more of *void* than *substance*, and therefore cannot fill the soul.

(*γ*) All men seek *rest* and *repose;* all are working for it —and yet it cannot be obtained here.

(*δ*) All men seek *life, more life*, &c., but must here walk

[1] Psalm lxxv.; St. Matt. xix. [2] Hebrews xiii. 14.
[3] Eccles. xii. 13. [4] 1 St. John ii. 15—17.

in the midst of death, within and without. The friends of sixty years ago, where are they? The only lasting friends here on earth are to be found in Jesus Christ and in His saints.

7.—THE ETERNITY OF THE END.

(*α*) The thought of eternity wakens deep and significant echoes in the soul—its note of warning rings loud and clear to us from the future life. For many a year it has haunted the cloisters, and sanctuary, and desert.

(*β*) It has magic power in enlightening the mind, moving the heart, and rousing the tepid soul. It has converted sinners, sanctified the just, consoled the good in their trials.

Prelude 1.—Listen to our Lord's words, saying, *Venite benedicti.*

Prelude 2.—Live in this thought and view of the eternal years.

First Point.—That the end is eternal is declared by our Lord Himself, who is Infinite Wisdom. It could not possibly be more clear that to reject this doctrine is to reject the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and it is the true end for all. The Church carried on and spread this teaching to the ends of the earth. Witness her *feasts* of the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Assumption, and All Saints, her *Sacraments*, her *worship* which proclaims it from her altars, her tabernacles, her ceremonies, and her pulpits.

Christians, who are her children, have believed in it without exception, for above 1,900 years, millions of them have made profession of it along an unbroken procession of generations, in creed and litany and hymns with all the fervour of their minds and hearts.

Second Point.—Humanity testifies to it in every age and country. *Æternitas est finis, et finis sine fine.* Its testimony possesses all the qualifications of truth—(*α*) swayed by no motives of interest, or of convention, persuasion,

or passion. (β) It is universal as to time and place, without date as to *where* or *when* it began, while so much else has changed or passed away; and there are none who call it in question save the slaves of vice, or pride, or avarice.

Third Point.—This eternity ought to influence our present and our future. (α) It has an *illuminative power*, and shows the hollowness of all temporal things. Here all is instability, agitation, weariness, pain, either separately, or combined. The course of this life is more rapid than that of the river, or the steam-engine—since the former has its backwater, the latter its separate stations. Again, hardly any two hours are alike. Whereas eternity is *Tota simul et plena possessio*. Nor is eternity far off, it is separated from us by a thread, by a semi-transparent wall. If I were to live only a million years after death, how great madness to risk these years for anything else! How foolish to cling to straws, as though by that means I could prevent myself from being borne along by the stream of time!

(β) My conviction that there is an eternity before me fills me with consolation. As the earth during summer heat stretches out its breast to receive the refreshing rain, so does the heart sigh for sympathy, for even a compassionating smile—*Consolantem me quæsivi:* though alas! it has to add too often, *et non inveni*. The dying soldier, a rich man beggared, some victim of calumny, when full of the love of God, look with longing towards their everlasting home.

(γ) The thought of eternity urges the soul forward towards *conversion*. Like a sword it kills the passions; its subdued and healing influence quenches the fire and heat of the concupiscences.

(δ) Its next step is to promote the soul's *sanctification*. The life of the saint is virtue realized in all its fulness, in heroism of humility, detachment, and voluntary suffering, towards which a vivid aspiration after eternity has most often planted the first step.

(ε) It lights in the soul a burning *zeal* for the sancti-

fication of others, and forms the motive for those sacrifices which are so frequently made in order to save other souls, immortal like itself.

8.—LIFE IS THE PASSAGE TO OUR END.

(*a*) Life is but the course of our days from our cradle to the home of our eternity, and has no more stability than a running stream.

(*β*) This is a popular and simple truth, but its very simplicity makes it all the more telling and decisive, the more pregnant in meaning, and powerful in its urgency.

(*γ*) The practical conviction of this truth transforms life, by dispelling illusions from the mind, uprooting inordinate attachments from the heart and strengthening the will to pursue good and fly from evil. We all stand in need of this transformation.

Prelude 1.—Rise, let us go: for here we have no abiding city.

Prelude 2.—Beg a practical conviction of this truth.

First Point.—Scripture impresses upon us that life is very short and uncertain. "The days of man are short, and the number of his months is with Thee. Thou hast appointed his bounds which cannot be passed."[1] We are pilgrims and strangers, "All these died according to faith . . . confessing that they were pilgrims and strangers on this earth."[2] The uncertainty of the end of this life is inculcated in parables, and by our Lord Himself in His warning to us that He will come like a thief in the night.

Second Point.—That this life is a passage to eternity has ever been the conviction of mankind. The epicurean and votary of pleasure, the severest ascetic and follower of the Gospel, never called it in question.

(*a*) It is a conviction which has taken complete, universal, permanent possession of humanity.

(*β*) The spontaneous aspiration of the human soul is

[1] Job xiv. 5. [2] Hebrews xi. 13; 1 St. Peter ii. 11.

for the world beyond the grave—it is no idle dream, no phantom of imagination. This is proved to us in the language and literature of every age and country, which is the reflection of the human soul, as the soul is the reflection of the Divine truth. "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us."[1] A little consideration convinces every man that he is not yet in his true home; that a force is ever impelling him forward; that there is no stopping-place on his way, even in his sleep, life is rushing forward, and every day brings him twenty-four hours nearer his eternity. In a real sense man is alone on his journey, and in many ways he is as a stranger among his intimates, who do not know the secrets of his soul.

Third Point.—The conviction that this life is but a passage to eternity, (α) enlightens the mind and dispels countless errors, for our senses, imagination, and passions conspire to mislead us. We are like men at a play, forgetful of its unreality; or as one in a railway train who imagines that it is the landscape which is moving along. But let us place ourselves in thought at the term of our life here, and look down from above upon the great panorama of scenes and events stretched out far behind in the past, and then we shall get a correct view of its different connecting links. The conviction thus acquired that this life is but one of passage, (β) produces in us a great detachment of heart. Some things we must love and cherish, such as those persons or objects which lead us to God, and bid us offer Him praise and service. To these we must cling as far as they help us on our way, and give us strength, courage, hopefulness, energy, and joy; others seduce us from our way, prevent our progress, and must be carefully rejected by us, according to the words of Anaxagoras, "Give way, I am speeding to my true country."

(γ) This truth imparts a new energy and activity to the soul. The world is too full of activity in doing evil, or else nothing of any service. Its *intellectual* energy and

[1] Psalm iv. 7.

activity, its activity of *heart* and the affections, produce pride, avarice, and sensuality, and these are spreading havoc in the minds and hearts of others. All such activity is wasted for want of practical conviction.

(δ) But there are some, even Religious, who may be inclined to compromise—will be poor, but only up to a certain point—will be obedient, after the same fashion—will labour, but only on what they like, and where, and how they like. Such as these adapt religious life and its rules to their own views and ideas, not themselves to their rules and constitutions.

Such do little good, though they often make great pretence and display, and not unfrequently end in the loss of their vocation. Let us rather act as travellers who are anxious to get to their journey's end: but wish not to travel alone. There is indeed one friend and one only who can help us, one who attached himself to us in our cradle, and will keep with us, if we do not repel him, even to our death-bed, one to whom we are thoroughly known, whose love never changes, who is ever ready to bless us, strengthen and console us. To that Angel Guardian let us cling, let us open our hearts and minds to him, and he will lead us to our Father in Heaven. *Veni coronaberis.*

9.—ON THE THREE SINS.

How terrible and mysterious was the first sin ever committed; taking place, as it did, on the confines of Heaven, among the Seraphim, Cherubim, &c., causing the greatest and most destructive of all catastrophes.

Prelude 1.—Imagine these spirits as God made them.

Prelude 2.—Beg grace to understand, &c., in their primeval innocence, and bliss.

First Point.—We may contemplate the *bright array* of spirits in their several choirs, all in the most perfect order and in their respective degrees of beauty, purity,

and happiness—so many bright morning stars of the spirit world. Let us ascend to the highest of these choirs, and chief amongst them, with no being betwixt him and God, is "Lucifer." Their intellects expand in the light of Truth as flowers under sunshine; their wills are framed according to Eternal laws of goodness and justice, while all revolve like planets round the centre of Eternal and Infinite Love! How can disorder enter these realms of universal harmony? or the hideousness of sin disfigure this abode of celestial beauty? God had given the angels FREE-WILL to merit possession of Himself and to fulfil their destiny by paying homage to His Son in the mystery of His Incarnation.

A third of that host refused. Lucifer's proud boast now rang forth: "I will not serve." This cry taken up by the others echoed through the vaults of Heaven. Hurled backward by Michael and his angels, they fell in disorder and confusion from the realms of harmony and peace into the abyss of Hell and torment, which their pride had opened out to receive them. Thus came the fearful punishment on their sin of thought. What ruin! what calamity! an ungoverned will has done its work! They defied God—God accepted the defiance. All is done in a moment, but the result lasts for ever. And this is the sentence of a God infinitely *good*, infinitely *just!*—*Justus es Domine, et rectum judicium tuum.*[1] "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer. Thou art brought down to Hell, into the depth of the pit. Thou that didst say: I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."[2]

Second Point.—Sin of our First Parents. "By the envy of the devil death came into the world; and they follow him that are of his side."[3] Earth was resplendent in its fresh and virginal beauty, decked with richest verdure and countless flowers; all the charms of nature reflected back the glory of the sunshine.[4] Man appears

[1] Psalm cxviii. 137. [2] Isaias xiv. 13. [3] Wisdom ii. 24.
[4] Cf. Genesis i. ii.

then clad in his strength and dignity, and woman stands beside him a vision of grace and loveliness. Before this monarch and his queen all living creatures rendered a willing service, and the inanimate creation spread out its wealth of form and colour. In every fresh object before them Adam and Eve read the goodness and munificence of their Creator, drawing their minds and hearts into more intimate union with Him. Such was the happy state of man in Paradise, and such was to have been our heritage also in this outer court of our eternal home. One thing alone could transform this inheritance of innocence, joy, and order, into one of misery, desolation, and confusion: that one thing was sin; and man was gifted with free-will, but this he abused and turned against himself, whence came his fall and likewise his ruin. Grant that the offence was but the apple. In that act was contained an outrage against God's command! a revolt against His kingly rights, a contempt of His love, a crime of deepest ingratitude. And as the result, a terrible curse came upon the earth, on the man and on the woman, and on humanity itself. Henceforth one mortal sin alone incurred the chastisement of death and of Hell.

Third Point.—It involves *eternal separation*, undying *regrets*, bitter *remorse*, utter *despair*, *eternal fires*. It is not God but sin that has done all this. Hear the agonizing cry—*Crucior in hac flamma*, which wraps the soul round like a garment; it is the fire of Love changed into an avenger; the fire of passions become executioners—and *for ever*. *Justus es Domine et rectum judicium tuum.*

10.—ON SIN.

Prelude 1.—Take to yourself those words of David, "I acknowledge my iniquity and my sin is always before me."[1]

Prelude 2.—Beg the grace which you desire.

[1] Psalm l. 5.

First Point.—Although *Sin* is by far the greatest of all human evils and calamities, yet the sense of it is gradually *being effaced* from men's minds, as well as the horror which we ought to have of it. Hence comes the great difficulty of effecting conversions now-a-days. The cause of this lies in (*α*) the tendency of so many minds to scepticism and to negations, and (*β*) of their hearts towards sensualism and material enjoyments and dissipation, whereby the idea of truth and falsehood, of good and evil, virtue and vice, becomes in them vague and confused. The would-be philosophers of Germany adopt that theory of "Identity of contraries," which renders everything from one point of view *good*, from another *evil!*

With *Pantheists*, all things are phenomena proceeding from *one subject, which is good and lawful.*

While *Atheism* leads to the negation of all superiority, each man being *independent* and subject to no *real law.*

With *Materialists*, sin is a thing of the soul, which is not a spiritual substance, and therefore leaves no ground for *moral dependence* or *duty.*

Free-thinkers deny any objective difference between good and evil—open out the way to unrestrained love and attachments, whence naturally springs *freedom of action* and negation of any law, and consequently of all sin.

From such principles it follows (1) that all instincts of life are legitimate, (2) all passions are good or at least harmless, (3) and all that the body craves is lawful, so that every gratification becomes right, holy, and praiseworthy!

Hence follow *authorized indifferentism* in regard of good or evil, truth or falsehood; *universal toleration*, gradual diminution of criminal punishment, and a free hand given to extenuating circumstances. As regards religion, blasphemous judgments of God's justice in punishing sin, negation of Hell, &c., are more than tolerated.

Second Point.—This decay of a true notion of sin is a *sign* and a *cause* of *decadence.* A keen sense of moral good and evil is the one safe test of man's greatness and

excellence; its absence is the measure of his degradation, and inflicts a mortal wound on the *intellect*, which it also corrupts and degrades. It further destroys the exercise of a MORAL CONSCIENCE, as we observe in the case of the savage, while it drowns all the higher feelings of remorse, of greatness, nobility, or heroism, and induces a deteriorating perversion of art, of literature, &c.

All this ends finally in the degradation of the *soul*, and of the *heart*, and the lowering of its faculty of LOVE, till it comes to love *what* and as it *likes* in a spirit of the meanest EGOISM. It brings man back to paganism, minus remorse, but plus impudence and shamelessness, commercial dishonesty, conjugal infidelity, corruption of young men; all this to the fearful detriment of SOCIETY! In the upper classes we see hardness and oppression; in the lower, hatred and revolt; and if these tendencies be not arrested, civilization will give place to the worst form of barbarism. Let us, therefore, pray fervently along with David, *Iniquitatem meam cognosco, et peccatum meum contra me est semper.*

II.—SIN AS AN OFFENCE AGAINST THE DIVINE WISDOM.

The essence of sin consists in a deliberate violation of the relations between man and God, or between human life and the Divine attributes. Let us take one of these, the wisdom of God as Creator and Preserver, and examine into the foulness and hideousness of sin.

Prelude 1.—As in Spiritual Exercises.

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—Sin tends to destroy the harmony and order of the universe, manifested by God therein for His own greater glory; it diverts the sinner from this end, and he in turn alienates God's creatures from it, thus subverting the due established order. *God* is *eternal* and

essential order.[1] "Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight."[2] The perfection of order and harmony, converging to unity, is manifest in creation! all creatures have a tongue singing in harmony, *Cœli enarrant gloria Dei*,[3] &c.: this they do by carrying out the end for which they are created. To fail in this is to cause *discord* and *disorder*, and the higher the creature the greater the disorder; *e.g.*, first in the *angels*, and then *man!* who stands in necessary relation to *all* other *creatures*. Here consider what "man" is, and the *relation* of all *creatures* to man,—what then ought man to be in regard of them?[4] Creatures say to man, *Trahe nos post te A.M.D.G.*, love us but do not misuse us, *quia armabit creaturam ad ultionem inimicorum*, &c.[5] Man by his position and nature, compound yet unique, stands between God and creatures—he, the intelligence, the eye, the heart, the worshipper, supplying the deficiency of all that cannot know, see, love, or adore the Creator.

Man is their *king*, but the vassal of God, he is their *priest!* But what if he sins!

Second Point.—Deformity is disorder, and as BEAUTY evokes ADMIRATION, deformity evokes disgust, &c., *e.g.*, in a distorted building, in a decaying flower, in a dead animal, in a corrupting human body, in a spiritually diseased soul, in a shattered intellect, in a heart disordered by avarice, pride, sensuality! or in a society without principle, and especially without God or religion!

Man ought to be king, mediator, priest, leader in one grand hymn of praise; but sin at once breaks up all order, and wrecks all God's work.

Third Point.—How then should I feel in regard of sin?

[1] Prov. viii. 23—36. [2] Wisdom xi. 21.
[3] Psalm xviii. 2. [4] Genesis i. 28—30; Psalm viii.
[5] Wisdom v. 18.

12.—SIN, AN OUTRAGE AGAINST GOD'S LOVE.

This is the most powerful consideration of sin, and shows it in its darkest colours, more particularly as it often assumes the character of a studied outrage and insult inflicted upon that love. The deepest of all wounds is that which assails man's heart and love, for these are ever *delicate*, *sensitive*, and *jealous*.

Prelude 1.—*Diliges Dominum Deum tuum.*

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—God is love.[1] As the sun of necessity shines and fire burns, so does God love; and as love demands love in return, so we are bound to love God. Sin acts directly against this truth. God has proved His love:

In the order of *nature*, by (α) *Creation—amor sui diffusivus.* His heart wanted creatures like Himself to love! for on our side there was nothing to move Him to create us. And all creatures proclaim the same truth —*ipse fecit nos*, in the gratuitous exercise of His love;

(β) By *Conservation*, and thus He has preserved and nourished me, and won my love.

(γ) His *Providence* ever attends upon me, guiding and warding-off evils, &c. His *eye* is ever on me, His *Heart* ever loving me, and His *hand* defending me—*Dominum æternum omnipotentem transeuntem vidi et obstupui.*

In the *supernatural* order. Christianity through Jesus Christ, *incarnate Love* living and acting in the world, especially in *Incarnation*, *Redemption*, and *Communion*, at Bethlehem, on Calvary, and on the Altar.

(1) In the Incarnation His Love *gives us Himself entirely, gratuitously.*

(2) On Calvary He suffers and dies for me, *sealing* His *love* by the *sacrifice* of His *Heart*, His *Soul* (by humiliation, &c.), and His *Body*.

On the altar He continues this perpetual sacrifice.

[1] St. John iv. 16.

In the *order* of GLORY, He raises us up to dwell with Him in everlasting happiness; this is the greatest epic of Divine love.

Second Point.—The *sinner* is a monster of base ingratitude.

We all feel the necessity of loving, &c.; how, then, is it that we do not love God? Creatures rebuke me. "O man, see!"—*quomodo amavit te.* Alas! the paradox!

(1) First wound of the Sacred Heart is *Indifference.* God feels so great love for me, and notes my indifference! We are as heedless of Him as if He were a stranger, though basking in His love like a flower in the sunlight.

(2) Second wound is *ingratitude.* This is a vice reprobated by all men, and yet we show it towards a *benefactor* so loving and lavish in bestowing favours—*Hæccine reddis, populc stulte et insipiens?* If I turn over the pages of my past life, I do not find one single mark of failure in His love to me, and yet what recompense have I made Him?

(3) Third wound is *contempt* for His love![1] And alas I have preferred *everything* else to HIM.

(4) Fourth wound is *betrayal* and treachery, and this I have too often shown towards Him who has loved me with a Divine love.

13.—SIN, AN OUTRAGE AGAINST DIVINE AUTHORITY.

God, being our Creator and Preserver, has full authority over us, and we stand in the relation of absolute dependence on Him.

Prelude 1.—*Ego Dominus et non est alter.*[2]

Prelude 2.—As usual.

First Point.—Authority of God. God as *Creator* is the *author* of all things, and is therefore invested with the *power* as well as the *right* to exercise absolute authority; and so has the parent, author, artist, or inventor, authority in

[1] Isaias i. 2. [2] Isaias xlv. 6.

respect of that which has proceeded from him. *Atheism, radicalism, absolutism; plenitude, universality, permanence,* are all ideas essentially connected with God, who is the ideal of that true authority which they either depreciate and deny or greatly magnify and enhance.

There is not a fibre of our being which is not derived from Him. As regards all our faculties, all the senses of our body, everything outside, everything within us; it is the same—*Ego Dominus et non est alter.* To disown this dependence is to be guilty of revolution, and revolution denotes the presence of Satan in humanity. Yet such revolution is consecrated under the name of LIBERTY. Now, between Liberty and Independence there lies a broad deep gulf; the former is the daughter of authority, the latter its antagonist; the one is the gift of God, the other is the inspiration of Satan—the one the glory of man, the other is a badge of his degradation; one answers to civilization, the other to barbarism; it is the parent of "free thought," of "free love," and of "free action."

Second Point.—There are various degrees of this Independence.

(*α*) *Indifference*, or voluntary forgetfulness and carelessness in regard to God and to authority, leading man to live and act as if no Divine authority existed, and thus banish from his mind all thought of the supreme sovereignty of God and of His Christ.

(*β*) *Deliberate violation* of the *rights* and *proprietorship* of God and of His Christ; being blinded by their passions and sunk in the mire of sin, they become *thieves* and robbers of His glory, *disobedient* subjects of their KING.

(*γ*) REVOLT, not always open and explicit, but still existing in fact—*nolumus hunc regnare super nos.*

(*δ*) OUTRAGE—tending, so to speak, to the annihilation of God—indirectly and implicitly, through the desire that there were no God at all. This manifests itself in the Atheistic spirit of the Press, that will not tolerate a God of knowledge, who sees my sin! that cries: Away with a *holy* God, who hates my sin; away with a *just* God, who will punish my sin. Welcome rather independ-

ence; welcome pleasure; welcome ambition; welcome money; welcome the strength of my passions and the joy of indulging them. Such is the thought of the sinner.

Third Point.—The one thing is to strike at the root of the evil by thorough *dependence on God*. The more you do this the more real *freedom* you will possess.

14.—SIN, AN OUTRAGE AGAINST THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

The measure of sin is gauged by the dignity of the person who is offended and the baseness of him who offends; a balance and proportion which may be increased by the circumstances and the nature of the relations between the two.

Prelude 1.—"Who is the great God, like our God."[1]

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—The Bible is a revelation and exaltation of the Greatness, Immensity, and Power of God.[2]

The earth, though so small, proclaims it.[3]

The sea, the heavens, and all therein were ordered and appointed by the Wisdom of God, delighting Himself with them as it were in sport, *ludens in orbe terrarum*.[4]

Second Point.—Baseness of the offender—a human molecule! dependent on others and on God for what I am and what I possess; dependent on the air, plants, animals, for life. What is my power if I compare it with that of all the dwellers in a city, a country, in all Europe? nay, the whole world! with that of the saints and angels! What am I, again, in the face of God's Greatness?

Third Point.—Different circumstances involved in the relations between God and man constitute (*a*) an act of

[1] Psalm lxxvi. 14.

[2] Psalms lxxvi. 14—21; cxlvi. 5—9; civ.; cxliv. 3—21; Deut. x. 17; Judith xvi. 16; Baruch iii. 25.

[3] Psalms viii. 1, 2; xxviii. 4—8. [4] Prov. viii. 24—31.

contempt, of looking down upon Him. When under contempt ourselves, we feel we would far rather submit to anything—to ruin, suffering, misery, or death, than to that, especially when manifested by a miserable creature like oneself; but in this case it is the infinitely good and perfect God who is despised by His own miserable and finite creature.

(β) Sin is an insult cast into the very face of God, under His very eye, and is thus far more offensive than anything done at a distance. Now God is more present to the sinner than the ocean that envelops the fish; the offence then touches Him at once and enters keenly into His being.

(γ) Sin braves and defies God's power and strives to put Him to open shame.

15.—ON HELL.[1]

In our age the minds even of good men often revolt against a full and uncompromising belief in Hell, yet its existence is most true, and it is our stern duty not to pare down our acceptance of its truth. Jesus Christ declares it, the Church teaches it, humanity in every age has acknowledged it.

Prelude 1.—Picture to yourself a land—*miseriæ, et tenebrarum, ubi umbra mortis, et nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat.*[2]

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—The nature and essence of man's damnation is his separation from God, who is infinite. This is voluntarily incurred by man and permitted on the part of God. God, who in His great love created man, is ever inviting him throughout his whole life to come back to Him who is his sovereign, absolute, and eternal Beatitude. The sinner refuses His entreaty, he will not listen, but insists on running after and clinging to

[1] St. Luke xvi. 22. [2] Job x. 22.

creatures, and so dies. All separation between beings involves suffering, the amount of which is graduated by the necessity for that union felt by different natures. Now the necessity of our union with God is founded on our destiny, on the aspirations of our nature, and on our natural power of love. Our suffering, therefore, is graduated by the greatness and value of the love lost, by the strength of love which attracts us to Him, and by the knowledge that He is our only end. Thus, when the child is separated from its mother, or the wife from her husband, what a fearful wound to the soul is such a separation! It cries out in its agony, "Woe is me, who am separated for ever from all good." In this terrible void I am stifled, I am suffocated, not from want of air, but of God! I feel an intense hunger after God, after the Infinite, with the eternal hunger of a longing *soul*. Fearful is the torment of my separation from all order which plunges me into disorder and confusion,—disorder in my body, in my mind, in my family, in the society and state to which I belong; each of these constitutes a sort of hell on earth,[1] yet, bad as this sort of hell is, it is limited and partial; not so, however, is the future Hell to come, with its overwhelming sadness, regret, and despair in the midst of irreparable loss.

Second Point.—Abyssus abyssum malorum invocat, in voce cataractarum tuarum; omnes fluctus tui super me transierunt.[2] (1) The multiplicity and universality of its pains. *Per quæ peccat quis, per hæc et torquetur.*[3] Profound exterior darkness, but intense internal light, revealing to us how greatly we have sinned against the exterior light given to us.

(2) The imagination is now tortured by hideous phantasms, though originally given to us to picture all that is pure, beautiful, and holy—all this in place of enjoying the Beatific Vision of God.

(3) The remorse of conscience.

(4) Conviction of the soul's state of a hateful and

[1] Mach. vi. 12, 13. [2] Psalm xli. 8. [3] Wisdom xi. 17.

degraded servitude in punishment of its obstinate abuse of free-will and rejection of the service of God.

(5) But there is a deeper abyss still, the hell of hatred in which the *heart* is tormented in punishment of its perverted love. There is, on the one hand, man's love tearing itself away from the love of God; and on the other, God's love withdrawing itself from the love of man.

Earthly love when changed becomes hatred, and here it is hatred which is directed against the infinitely good, holy, and just God, with a virulence which shall never be appeased, nor driven from the heart.

16.—ALLEGORY OF THE PRODIGAL SON FURTHER DEVELOPED.

DEPARTURE OF THE PRODIGAL.

This parable is equally persuasive and instructive, it is of constant occurrence in the lives of all those who are carried away by their passions and go astray.

Prelude 1.—*Da mihi portionem substantiæ quæ me contingit.*[1]

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—The Prodigal claims independence, through selfishness and impatience for the indulgence of his desires.

This father represents God, in the exercise of His *authority*, *love*, *and truth;* the two sons represent two divisions of mankind—saints and sinners. The younger being the more foolish sighs to be free, and wants to do as he likes before the time. Why? Why so soon? By what right? Such is the beginning of every sinful course. The sinner wishes to have his own way, and to throw off all control, in *thoughts*, *affections*, and *actions*. God enjoins adoration of His Son (the sinner replies, *non serviam*), obedience to the Church, with same result, repression of

[1] St. Luke xv. 12.

pride, avarice, sensuality, &c. Alas![1] the sinner leaves God, whose *rights*, *majesty*, *authority*, *power*, and *goodness* are infinite, and claims liberty to *love everything* else but not his Father; to reject all his Father's *teaching*, for *liberty* of *thought*—and at eighteen this proud B.A. in science or literature knows little of either philosophy, or theology, or dogma, or the morals of Christianity, and turns his back upon Bossuet, Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and other matured writers, and dashes off like a wild colt into the pastures of rationalism, positivism, and similar schools of thought, denying the authority of God to command him, despising Divine love which clings to him, and rejecting that truth which can alone guide his steps to the attainment of his happiness.

Second Point.—Non post multos dies, profectus in regionem longinquam. There is now, he concludes, no happiness at home, he will therefore go as far as he can from his brother, father, friends; he will drown his qualms in dissipation, will try to forget what he has left behind, the law of God, and the acknowledgment of His sovereignty—though faith and reason sound its claims in his ears. So he passes along from indifference to doubt, and thence to absolute denial, giving up prayer and sacraments in a far *distant country*, where Satan rules. He rejects the advances of God's love, closes his ears to the appeals of nature and of duty, to the voice of grace, to the lessons of the Incarnation and Redemption, that proclaim God's love for him; and fixes his wayward heart on anything rather than his Father.

He has gone into a *far distant country*, where the sun of truth never shines, but all is steeped in utter darkness —*Qui facit malum odit lucem.*[2] He revels in writings destructive of faith and morals, and vaunts that he is a man of *strong mind*.

End with a firm resolution to reconsider one's ways.

[1] "Thy own wickedness shall reprove thee. Know thou that it is a evil and bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God, and that M fear is not with thee, saith the Lord the God of hosts." (Jerem. ii. 19.

[2] St. John iii. 20. Satan's Address to Sun. (Milton.)

SENSUALITY OF THE PRODIGAL.

By sin man flies far from the guiding voice, the restraining hand of his Father, to enjoy his independence and gratify his passions.

Prelude 1.—*Dissipavit substantiam suam vivendo luxuriose.*[1]

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—Nature of his life—*vivendo luxuriose.* The influence of circumstances, of human nature, the habits and enchantments of the world, all draw him towards this sensuality.

(*α*) The sinner in proportion as he flies from God, who is *spirit*, must be attracted to the opposite, that is, the *flesh*.

(*β*) The more man neglects spiritual things the more does he give himself up to his body.

(*γ*) The inordinate desire of enjoyment and increased license of his *will*, *heart*, and *mind*, must induce a corresponding license of his *senses* to which all his environments incline him.

(*δ*) Our *fallen nature* also persuades us to *sensuality*, for sin caused it to revolt against the Infinite Being, the personification of all order, reason, truth, and justice (*caro concupiscit contra spiritum*),[2] so that even glorious saints have to fight against it, and the only means of resisting it is to cling close to God with our whole head, heart, and will.

Now the Prodigal acts in direct opposition to this, and the world helps him in the same direction all the more, nay, it seduces him—under the mask of science, philosophy, and progress. Sensuality may be found in the *arts*, in *books*, in *journals*, in the theatre, in amusements.

Second Point.—Experience and facts go to prove that sensuality is the result of sin in pagan times, Christian times, and in our own day.

(*α*) In *paganism* the idolatry of the flesh—witness

[1] St. Luke xv. 13. [2] Romans vii. 24; 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Rome, Athens, Memphis, Carthage, Nineveh, Babylon. All were alike in east and west, in north and south.

(β) *Christian times.* Of course religion elevated man and enabled him to emulate the angels, &c.; but side by side still remained those who became heretics and schismatics, rationalists, all of whom bore the stamp of sensuality and luxury, as did the philosophers of the seventeenth century.

(γ) At the *Present day*. Look around you and regard men in every station of life, at every age; and behold atheism in literature, in art, in politics, in law, socialism, communism, anarchy, popular atheism. With a godless education what are we to expect in the next generation?[1]

THE RAVAGES OF A LIFE OF SENSUALITY.

(St. Luke xv. 13, 14.)

The Prodigal goes from ruin to ruin, from misery to misery.

Prelude 1.—*Et postquam omnia consummasset, cœpit egere.*

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—In a state of grace, the supernatural crowns our human nature—*Divinæ consortes naturæ.*[2] This state falls first. Sin gives mortal wound to it.[3] A sin of the *flesh* is directly opposed to God, who is a spirit. It is an *insult* to each of the Divine persons. Sin disinherits the sinner, it robs him of charity, then of hope, and so of Faith—*Hæccine est urbs olim plena populo*, &c.; and all this without a tear! You lose a fortune and you cry—a friend ditto. But God is abandoned and you find your soul empty—*cœpit egere.* No prayer, no going to church, no sacraments!

Second Point.—Next to loss of divine life comes ruin of the *moral life* in the *conscience*, *heart*, and *will;* the

[1] Psalm xiii. 1. "Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus. Corrupti sunt, et abominabiles facti sunt in studiis suis."

[2] 2 St. Peter i. 4. [3] St. James i. 15.

conscience then becomes gradually choked; it begins to envy animals that have no remorse—*Felices bestiæ quibus non est intellectus.* It ends by denying the existence of evil and denouncing the morality of the Gospel.

Next follows the ruin of the *heart—virtus est ordo amoris;* but vice is the disorder of love, &c. Absence of love is the greatest of miseries, and sensuality *dries up* the heart, which is rendered hard, cold, indifferent, selfish, and cruel.[1]

Sensuality paralyzes and perverts the *will*—which becomes a helpless slave—*Facta est fames valida.* Formerly there was a conscience; formerly the heart loved and the will operated, but now all that is gone.

Third Point.—This embraces the loss and ruin of the *intellect* in respect of science, literature, and art, *memory, imagination;* all its hopes wither, and despair or insanity may ensue—*Facta est fames valida et cœpit egere.* Consider also the *physical ruin* brought on by sensuality—*Dissipat totam substantiam*—in a bodily exhaustion unknown to animals, while man craves still more. The oak-tree flourishes on its sap, but man drains his from him! Look at him even when still young, and mark his eyes, lips, cheeks—all thin and wan.

Last of all comes loss of fortune, wealth, and patrimony; he will even beg and steal. Thus has this old man of thirty naught for his companions save misery, disease, and want.

THE SLAVERY OF THE PRODIGAL.

(St. Luke xv. 15.)

Prelude 1.—*Adhæsit uni civium regionis illius; et misit illum in villam suam ut pasceret porcos*, &c.

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—The reign itself of passion—especially of sensuality—is a slavery and destroys all liberty—*vide*

[1] Wisdom xv. 10.

passim, in St. Paul's Epistles. St. John viii. 34,[1] shows the same.

Every abuse of liberty tends to establish slavery. Man as a *creature* necessarily serves a master. . . . If, then, he throws off the service of God, he falls under the yoke of another, and in the exercise of his free-will subjects himself to the tyranny of an illegitimate power.[2] It is the same with the *family* and with *society;* the proud are humbled; the ambitious are degraded; the sensualist is afflicted in his flesh; every sin is an *abuse* of *liberty;*[3] and every indulgence of passion renders it more despotic. A prize-fighter when worsted in successive rounds becomes weaker as the tyranny of his passions makes him selfish, blind, capricious, cruel, till he becomes too enfeebled to resist them.[4]

Second Point.—Characteristics of this slavery.

It is *degrading*, for the sinner is his own tyrant, and this tyranny extends to everything in man and to all his faculties—his memory, imagination, and will, and to all the senses of his body; and it is likewise *perpetual*, unless by the great grace of God he repents. The sinner carries his chains wherever he goes, by night and day, in manhood and old age.[5] It is a double degradation to have fallen from *such* a *height* of *dignity* and *nobility* in the order both of nature and of grace; and into what a depth of lying and hypocrisy—nay, often murder—thus *feeding swine* and *sharing their food!*

[1] "Omnis qui facit peccatum servus est peccati."

[2] Wisdom xi. 17.

[3] "Thou shalt serve thy enemy in hunger and thirst, and nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put an iron yoke upon thy neck until he consume thee." (Deut. xxviii. 48.)

[4] Augustine, *Confessions*, Book viii. cc. 2, 5.

[5] "The yoke of my iniquities hath watched; my strength is weakened; the Lord hath delivered me into a hand out of which I am not able to rise." (Lament. i. 14.)

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL.

(St. Luke xv. "Surgam et ibo.")

First Point.—In his return there are three stages—(α) he becomes conscious of his degradation and wretched state; he *sees;* a sinner often *will* not look at nor realize his sad condition, yet without this can be no real conversion.

(β) He next *wills* to amend, but how great the struggle in his soul? the difficulty to break loose,[1] and besides, the misery to him; he will be ridiculed; he will fall on the way; it is too long. He is, however, determined to do it—*Surgam et ibo;* but then, again, a new difficulty: how will he be received? Will he not be spurned from the door; this humiliation however he deserves, and he will trust to his father's heart!

(γ) He *executes* his resolve at once without delay, and he perseveres despite fatigues and misgivings on the way, &c.

Second Point.—Father's reception. He too, SEES, RESOLVES, and ACTS.

Sometimes to outrage a friend begets enmity and cuts off all hope of forgiveness; but not so with a father or a mother; and *a fortiori,* not so with God. (α) He *sees* and reads your heart with its every movement, and consequently well knows the three stages through which it is passing—your confusion and horror, too, at your degradation, and He helps you. (β) He marks your determination to return, and helps you there also. Illustrate from Tobias and Anna.[2] So God recognizes the Prodigal—*Cum adhuc longe esset, misericordia motus est;* for His nature is *bonitas,* His *opus* is *misericordia.*

(γ) What the father DID: *currens cecidit super collum ejus.*

[1] Augustine, *Confessions.*
[2] Tobias x. xi.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN (*continued*).

(St. Luke xv: "Pater, peccavi in cœlum, et coram te: jam non sum dignus vocari filius tuus. Dixit autem pater ad servos suos: manducemus et epulemur, quia hic filius meus mortuus erat, et revixit; perierat, et inventus est. Et cœperunt epulari.")

How inspiriting is this description; how incredible were it not God's own account. It depicts the happiness of reconciliation—(*α*) in the sinner who regains his innocence, love, and joy with God; (*β*) the joy felt in Heaven; and (*γ*) the happiness on earth amongst his real friends.

First Point.—Happiness of the Prodigal. *Real* happiness dwells only in the soul; and cannot be produced by riches, &c., which are mostly external and material. It consists of three elements—*innocence, love, joy*—and of these neither sickness, misfortune, nor poverty can rob us.

How beautiful is the grace of innocence compared with any natural beauty—the beauty of a soul when in the state of grace!—*cito proferte primam stolam.*

How rich a gain is the restored *love* of *his father*—*Date annulum in manu ejus.* God is love as sun is light; and when sin is gone, the clouds, so to speak, are dispersed, so that His love goes straight to the soul—that *love* is the BASIS OF ALL HAPPINESS. Real JOY is once more his. It is as dew on flowers; as the light and foretaste of Heaven—*Adducite vitulum saginatum filius meus revixit.*

Second Point.—There is also joy in *Heaven!* God rejoices! *The Father!*—how and why! *Son*, how and why! *Holy Ghost.* The Blessed Virgin, why! Angels, why!

Third Point.—There is joy on *earth* among all true friends; has health been restored to a limb of the body! to a member of the family! to a mother, a sister—*mortuus revixit*—or a husband perhaps has been converted. There is joy also for the Church—*Filios enutrivi et exaltavi, ipsi autem spreverunt me! . . . Convertam manum meam ad te; post hæc vocaberis civitas justi, urbs fidelis.*[1]

[1] Isaias i. 2, 25, 26.

17.—ON HUMILITY.

Humility is a virtue which prompts a man to take a true estimate of himself, and rightly to depreciate himself,[1] or as St. Bernard describes it: "It is a virtue which causes a man to think lightly of himself, and to acknowledge this in his words and conduct."[2]

I. This virtue is based upon the clear knowledge which man has of himself, of his dependence, and of his defects. Such knowledge influences the will, thereby inclining it to regulate its actions in conformity with the due appreciation of self. It is, moreover, a virtue strongly inculcated by God, and approved by right reason. Thus our Lord bids us "learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart."[3] St. James counsels us to "be humble in the sight of God, and He will exalt us."[4] Further, the sanction of a divine promise is attached to the practice of this virtue; for it is written, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[5]

The whole life of our Blessed Lord, from His Incarnation to His Death upon the Cross, must convince us of the beauty, excellence, and necessity of this virtue, and shows how dear it was to His Sacred Heart. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross."[6]

That this virtue is most consistent with reason is clear, even if revelation had been silent on the subject. For reason teaches us that of ourselves we have nothing; that whatever qualities we enjoy, whether in the intellectual, moral, or physical order, whatever we possess in the order of nature or of grace, all are derived either immediately or mediately from God,[7] on whom and on whom alone, we are absolutely dependent. In Him

[1] *Sum.* 1. q. 161. a. 1. [2] *Tract. de grad. hum.* [3] St. Matt. xi. 29.
[4] St. James iv. 10. [5] St. Luke xiv. 11. [6] Philipp. ii. 8.
[7] "What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.)

we live, move, and have our very being: without Him we are so helpless, that we cannot even think a good thought. The practical recognition of this our absolute dependence is most pleasing to God our Lord, who is the Spirit of Truth; and therefore it is that we find all good things and blessings promised to those who are truly humble, whilst the proud are pronounced to be an abomination to the Lord, and are threatened with the anger and vengeance of God.

II. Various ways or degrees in which this virtue may be reduced to practice, are laid down by Lessius.[1]

1. To hold oneself in small esteem as to any qualities or accomplishments, which a man may have acquired by his own efforts.

2. To feel convinced how unworthy one is of all the gifts God has bestowed upon him; an acknowledgment most strictly true as far as man himself is concerned.

3. It follows that in all truth and honesty, man must suppress every desire of esteem, praise or honour, knowing well, that all credit is due not to him, but to God, who of His own free-will has given to him all that he is, or that he in any way may be said to possess. Just as in a statue or painting, no credit is due to the work of art itself, but its whole beauty, excellence, and celebrity are to be attributed to the artist who has designed and executed it.

4. From an honest desire to be judged and estimated according to his true worth, and as he is in the sight of God, the humble man wishes to be held of little account, as far as he himself is concerned: hence as St. Bernard says: "The man who is really humble does not wish himself to be proclaimed humble, but to be reputed as nothing worth."[2]

5. The humble man will be pained instead of flattered when he finds himself treated with consideration, or hears himself and his actions extolled, unless this redounds to the honour and glory of God.

6. If he institutes any comparison between himself

[1] *De Just. et Jure*, iv. c. 3. [2] Serm. in Cant. xxv. § 10.

and others, he will always give the preference to them; for, reflecting on what he is *of himself*, and what others are by the *gifts* which *God* has *conferred* upon them, he can with all truthfulness regard himself as more despicable and worse than all others.[1]

The humble man sees and acknowledges his own weakness and miseries, whilst he shuts his eyes to the good qualities and gifts which God has bestowed on him; whereas he sees and recognizes the benefits conferred on others, refusing to let his mind dwell on their shortcomings or defects.

7. Finally, he submits himself in all things to the holy will and disposal of God, as clay lies passive in the hands of the potter, and he cheerfully submits to be governed by others, for God's sake, and as His rightly constituted ministers, as far as his station, position, and the laws of prudence and propriety permit.

III. The vices opposed to this virtue of Humility.

1. Undue and unreasonable self-depreciation is opposed to real humility, and is a violation of sincerity or truth. By it we expose office, position, or station to detriment or injury; nor does it in any way tend to the benefit of others, or to the edification of our neighbour. It is often a great delusion, and the effect of a secret and subtle pride or self-consciousness, to speak disparagingly of oneself: hence it is far better to adopt the golden rule, namely, to avoid the use of the first personal pronoun as much as possible, as well in public as in private.

2. The second vice opposed to humility is pride, or the inordinate appreciation of our own imagined excellence or superiority. This arises from the undue consideration of our own gifts and advantages, without assigning them to God, from whom we have derived them; as also from our blinding ourselves to our many weaknesses, imperfections, or defects. From these causes we are led to attribute to ourselves greater excellence or merit than we really possess, to judge ourselves better than we are, and therefore to take complacency in

[1] *Sum.* 2a 2æ, q. clxi. a. 3.

ourselves, to the disparagement of others. Hence, too, arise inordinate desires of praise, of notice, of deference and subservience; hence, too, feelings of disappointment, grief, irritation, and resentment, when these desires are not gratified; hence, also, contempt for others, preference of self to others, even to those in authority, and condemnation of others for want of prudence, judgment, charity, &c., if in anything they think or act differently from ourselves. Hence, too, that extreme sensitiveness when any fault is found with us, or charitable suggestion is made to us for our greater temporal or spiritual good.

3. Although less criminal and less contemptible than pride, there is another vice equally opposed to the virtue of humility. This vice is a foolish appreciation of our attainments, whether physical, intellectual, or moral, and a morbid craving for ostentation and display, which alike betray want of judgment. It is at once a grave cause of disedification, and exposes us to the pity or contempt of others, and sooner or later is punished by God with bitter humiliation. Let us examine ourselves seriously on these points, and see how far we have failed in regard of this virtue, and what practical steps we should take to correct our faults.

End with the "Our Father."

18.—THE FUTURE LIFE.

How strange a thing it is that knowing, as every man does, that he is here on earth merely for a few short years, and enjoys at most only the beginning of an existence, amidst scenes of ever-recurring death; knowing, too, by infallible revelation and by the dictates of reason, that his soul once having been created can never cease to be, but must go on in the fulness of life as long as God is God, he yet allows himself to be engrossed by the passing things of time, as though there were no future life awaiting him. That there is another life is certain, a

life that shall never end, the nature of which, whether for weal or woe, he must himself determine: for he has the awful power to decide whether he will be eternally happy in the possession of God and in the company of the angels and saints in Heaven, or eternally miserable with the damned in Hell. To impress this truth more deeply upon us let us consider the following points.

First Point.—There is "another life" towards which I am hurrying forward. Every evening I am twenty-four hours nearer to it than on the previous day. Even whilst I sleep, I am still moving rapidly onward towards it, never halting on the way! Oh! what a comfort this, what a source of courage and consolation to one who is full of earnestness in the service of God. Listen to the holy man Job, covered with loathsome ulcers and seated on a dunghill: "I know that my Redeemer liveth; and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again in my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom."[1] And St. Paul also: "As to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day."[2] And again: "The sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the weight of future glory."[3] It was their belief in another life that prompted the Apostles to abandon houses, lands, and kindred, and with joy to welcome sufferings and death itself, in order to purchase eternal delights. It was the anticipation of another life that caused the martyrs to brave the rage of tyrants and the tortures of their executioners; that peopled the deserts with solitaries, who in penance, fasting, and prayer, passed their days, happy in the expectation of the eternal years. It has filled monasteries with holy virgins of both sexes, and has incited confessors to wander through the whole world, to brave every danger, and to endure cheerfully every kind of hardship.

[1] Job xix. 25, 26. [2] 2 Timothy iv. 8. [3] Romans viii. 18.

Second Point.—There is another and an eternal life. How few and transitory and uncertain are the years of man on earth! "Man born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries. Who cometh forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state: the days of man are short, and the number of his months is with Thee."[1] Here there is no stability but incessant change, no peace but constant unrest, no repose but a never-ending alternation of cares, anxieties, hopes, and fears. Then, again, how very uncertain! The Author of life tells us that He will call us away when we least expect it, and daily experience convinces us that there is nothing more uncertain than the hour of death. But it is far otherwise with that other life, which will never end. Here sorrows and pain, cares and disappointments quickly pass, and joys and pleasures are no less fleeting. Not so in the other life, where nothing passes away, where all is stable and unchangeable, where what is possessed is "fulness of life[2] without possibility of change, of increase or diminution;" where the soul will enjoy perfect happiness which can never be lost, or will be plunged into the abyss of despair and anguish from which it can never be released. What a terrible alternative! what a fearful contrast! This thought of eternity is pregnant with bliss and delight for those who have lived the life of the just on earth. They have done wisely in repressing their passions, in flying from sin and from the occasions which exposed them to danger, in doing works of penance, in observing the commandments of God. They detached themselves from the things of time, they spent their lives in sacrifices for God and their neighbour, they followed in the footsteps of Christ, in view of this eternal life: and how wisely!

Let us, like the just who have gone before us, fear nothing but to offend God our Lord, let us detach ourselves from all that is not God, let us keep our mind fixed on this other life, "having in our minds the eternal

[1] Job xiv. 1—5. [2] "Tota simul et plena vita." (Boethius.)

years," desiring nothing but to dwell for ever with Christ in never-ending bliss and glory.

Third Point.—There is "another life." What an overwhelming thought to the sinner! When for him the brief space of life is drawing to its close, what bitter memories must force themselves upon him! "I did but taste a little honey, with the end of the rod, and behold I must die."[1] Life has been wasted in the search after fleeting and hollow pleasures, in the study of ease and comfort, in the sacrifice of conscience for gain, in the indulgence of unlawful cravings, in the gratification of unbridled passions. The sinner has lived for self and not for God, for the esteem or praise of men, for the bubble of worldly glory, for the acquisition of worldly wealth: and now he sees all these gradually receding from him; and as his mortal life is drawing to a close, "another life" is opening out before him. Tarry he cannot, he must go forward; eternity is preparing to swallow him up. He has been gliding thoughtlessly over the surface of life, without ever attempting to fathom its depth; he has spent his days in a dream, and he awakes from his sleep to find his hands empty. He has been pursuing shadows instead of contemplating the great unseen realities of life, until too late he finds himself undeceived. Oh! what must be the bitterness of his regrets. How clearly now does he realize his folly when it is too late to exchange it for true wisdom.

If we have, then, any sense at all, we shall direct our thoughts, desires, and efforts to this future life; we shall spare no pains, deem no sacrifices too great to secure its being a happy one. Let it be ours to say with Asaph the Psalmist: "I thought upon the days of my youth; and I had in my mind the eternal years. I meditated in the night with my own heart, and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit."[2]

In each moment of life here below, the question with us is one of loss or gain for eternity.

[1] "Gustavi paululum mellis, et ecce ego morior." (1 Kings xiv. 43.)

[2] Psalm lxxvi. 6, 7.

This living faith in "another life" is the great motor-power of sanctity. What is our faith in this point? What influence has it exercised upon us in our appreciation of the things of the world? What effect has it had on the guiding or regulating of our desires, on the manner and intention with which we perform the every-day duties of our state of life. Do we think and will and act as becomes one who is hurrying onwards to his eternity, or rather as one who is a mere creature of time? Whilst yet we have the opportunity, let us resolve to correct what is defective in us, that when the Lord may please to call us, He may find us ready to respond to His call.

19.—ON TRIALS.

No truth is more clearly declared in the Sacred Scriptures, or more strongly confirmed by experience, than that our life, as long as we are here below, is marked out with trials. No matter what may be our age, or calling, or social position, this is always true, our days are few in number, but are filled up with many miseries: miseries from without or from within, miseries from ourselves or from others, miseries from all our fellow-men or from the enemy of our human nature. "Truly it is a misery to live on earth;"[1] and again, "The Cross is always ready and at every turn awaits you. Turn whithersoever you please, you cannot avoid it."[2]

Yes! trials are necessary; but they are often useful, and they can at all times be turned to great profit and spiritual advantage, if we only employ the means thereto with which God has provided us.

First Point.—"Because thou wast acceptable unto God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee."[3] So spoke the Archangel to Tobias, when he announced to him that he had been sent by God to heal him, and to deliver Sara from the devil.

[1] à Kempis, i. c. 22. [2] à Kempis, ii. c. 13. [3] Tobias xii. 13.

Again it is declared by the mouth of Job, "Blessed is the man whom God correcteth; refuse not, therefore, the chastising of the Lord. For He woundeth and He cureth, He striketh and His hand shall heal."[1] The same truth is insisted upon by St. James: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life."[2]

We read that trials and temptations await all those who enter in earnest into the service of God:[3] that far from being a mark of God's displeasure, they should be accepted rather as a sign of His approbation and good-will in our regard,[4] and as being special proofs of His favour and love.[5]

From the above and from many other passages, we see that trials and temptations are the portion of the just, that they are a source of blessing, and a pledge of God's watchful care and spiritual love.

How true this is will appear more manifestly if we study the lives of the servants of God, from the Apostles down to our own time. It is verified in those who have proved their fidelity by laying down their lives for Christ, or who have made life a lingering martyrdom by constant sacrifices of penance, prayer, and patience, or who in the spirit of confessors, have welcomed trials and temptations, and have overcome all difficulties which stood in the way of the knowledge and love of God in their own souls or in the souls of other.

If we consult reason itself, enlightened by Divine faith, the necessity of temptations and trials is still more firmly established. For the devil, the great enemy of man, and the world which is opposed to Christ our Lord, cannot but hate all those who strive to follow in His footsteps, and who stand therefore in opposition to them, who reject their false allurements, and condemn and denounce their pernicious principles.

Second Point.—And why does God permit His servants to be tried by temptation? It is:

[1] Job v. 17. [2] St. James i. 12.
[3] Ecclus. ii. 1. [4] Job xii. 13. [5] Hebrews xii. 5.

1. Because in this way He makes trial of their virtue. "As silver is tried by fire, and gold in the furnace, so doth the Lord try the heart;"[1] and again, "The furnace trieth the potter's vessel, and the trials of affliction just men."[2] Therefore holy David prayed to the Lord, "Prove me, O God, and know my heart, examine me and know my paths."[3]

2. God allows His true servants to be tempted in order that He may fill them with humility, and render them mistrustful and diffident of their own strength, whilst at the same time it leads them closer to our Lord, and causes them to repose their confidence in His protection. For in the hour of trial and temptation, we see clearly our own weakness and helplessness if left to ourselves, and thus are compelled to have recourse to God in prayer. Happy would it have been for St. Peter if he had followed the counsel of Jesus, instead of presuming on his own strength. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

3. Another reason why God permits His servants to be tempted, is in order that by His grace they may increase their merits here and their glory hereafter.

We must not suppose that we are making great progress in virtue when all goes on smoothly. This state is often most dangerous, as it is calculated to make us negligent in God's service, to foster vanity and self-complacency, and to become remiss in prayer and in all spiritual exercises. We grow careless in avoiding the occasions of sin, and thus expose ourselves to the attacks of our enemy who never sleeps, but "like a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour."[4]

Third Point.—What are the means to be employed, if we would overcome when tempted? The first class of trials and temptations, is when we find ourselves in a state of universal apathy, darkness, insensibility, and heaviness of soul. At such times, meditation, prayer,

[1] Prov. xvii. 3.
[2] Ecclus. xxvii. 6. [3] Psalm cxxxviii. 23. [4] 1 St. Peter v. 8.

penance, detachment, all become irksome and difficult. We feel a loathing for everything supernatural. Faith seems darkened, hope undermined, charity grown cold. Like one groping to find his way in the dark, we know not how to take a step forward, or rather feel unable to do so. This is an experience very trying to earnest and anxious souls; they begin to fear that God has turned away His face from them, as if all their past labours, sacrifices, and endeavours have been in vain, as if further perseverance were impossible. Like our Lord on one occasion, they are filled with loathing and weariness, *cœpit tædere.*

When thus tried, we must persevere yet more resolutely in detaching ourselves entirely from all earthly creatures, for it is to these that the devil and our own corrupt nature would fain persuade us to turn in search of comfort and consolation. We must, in the next place, humble ourselves, fully acknowledging that of ourselves we are nothing, and can do nothing, and that all our sufficiency must come from Him who "is faithful and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but will make also with temptation issue that we may be able to bear it."[1]

It is at such times, also, that we must be brave and take up extra exercises of self-abnegation and prayer, thereby to move the Heart of our Lord to compassion; we must make, also, fervent acts of confidence in His loving protection, saying: "Even though He should kill me, yet will I hope in Him."[2] "If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear: if a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident."[3]

Another excellent practice, is to retire in spirit to the Garden of Gethsemane, and there keep company with our dear Lord, who when full of loathing and sadness, and fear, being in a very great agony, prayed the longer. Persevere in prayer from day to day: perhaps to-morrow

[1] 1 Cor. x. 13. [2] Job xiii. 15.
[3] Psalm xxvi. 3.

the clouds will be dispersed, and then bright sunshine will follow.

The second class of trials comprises those against faith and purity, which may be either of short or long duration. If the former, they should be little heeded, and the mind be diverted to other thoughts and the heart be lifted up to our Lord or His Blessed Mother. If such trials are persistent they should still be met in a perfectly calm spirit, while we humble ourselves profoundly at the feet of Jesus, or kneel with Mary at the foot of the Cross.

With patience, confidence, and humility we must put unassailable trust in prayer, knowing that our prayers cannot but be heard. Let us also take care not to distract the mind by elaborate self-examinations which only aggravate our temptations, and increase their number and form. Let us not take refuge in the use of such words as "perhaps," or "if," when by God's grace we feel that our will is really good, and that we take ordinary pains to fulfil our duties, especially those of prayer, not exposing ourselves knowingly or willingly to the occasions of such temptations, and being sincerely troubled at even the thought of yielding to sin. As long as this is our frame of mind let us go forward in peace and confidence, assuring ourselves that by God's mercy there has been no sin.

A third class of trials comprises those against charity. We feel sometimes a strong tendency to sit in judgment on others, to misinterpret their actions, to take an unfavourable view of all they say or do, even in things most innocent, and if we cannot condemn their deeds, to impute to them less perfect motives or intentions. Sometimes we are tempted to postpone them to ourselves, or to forego the duties of charity, rather than sacrifice our love of self in some form or other; we feel a repugnance to help them, or sympathize with them in their sorrow or afflictions, or to rejoice with them in their success or good fortune; it may be that we are tempted to entertain some aversion for them, to despise them, to

treat them with disdain and contempt, or what is still worse, to ignore them altogether.

Such tendencies may arise from pride, or self-complacency, or from a morbid state of mind or imagination at the time; or, again, it may be that the manners, disposition, or conduct of certain persons may but ill accord with our own ideas; or may be in themselves disagreeable and faulty. In any case, we have no excuse for harbouring the temptation, but should remember, (1) who *we* are who venture to sit in judgment upon others. Let us take the beam out of our own eye, before we look at the mote in the eye of our brother. (2) Then, who is our neighbour? He is brother to Jesus, for whom Jesus died, and whom Jesus loves with all his faults, and whom Jesus commands us to love. He is *our* brother too: a member of the same mystical body: destined later to live, and reign, and be happy with us in our Eternal Home. Jesus, also, has substituted him in place of Himself as the object of our love. (3) Let us remember that we should do to others as we wish them to do to us, and let us shut one eye to the faults of one another, whilst keeping the other eye wide open to see their good qualities, for these are always far more numerous.

Let us examine ourselves on all these points. How far are we practically convinced of the necessity of suffering? Have we tried to turn our trials, sufferings, and temptations to account? Have we had recourse to the right means of overcoming temptations? Let us examine ourselves seriously on these points, and make acts of sorrow for all our faults or shortcomings, together with firm and practical resolutions for the time to come.

End with an "Our Father."

20.—ON DISSIPATION.

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God, and after making an act of faith and humble adoration, let us beg light and grace to see the dangers and misery of

dissipation, and to apply those means which will protect us from yielding to it.

First Point.—How would you describe a dissipated soul? It is a soul which is seldom present to itself, or studies itself. In it the imagination is like some public market-place, in which all sorts of people are perpetually coming and going, hustling each other; and where each is trying to further his own individual interests; where all is noise and hurry, and where it is hard to hear or to be heard in the midst of the bustle and confusion.

Dissipation throws open all the gates of the soul, the passions rush in and out, and a thousand thoughts cause it to forget self and to busy itself about other persons and things which do not concern it, and thus the soul becomes deaf to the inspirations of the Spirit, and blind to the manifestations of God, it loses its taste for prayer, and all wish to practise self-denial.

Second Point.—A dissipated soul never interests itself in the present, nor tries to discharge its actual duties in any way perfectly and with a right intention, but lives in the past or forecasts the future, wasting itself either on fruitless and dangerous memories, or on idle hopes, fears, and imaginations which will probably never be realized. The result is the habitual frittering away of time, constantly beginning, but never completing new undertakings, wasting life in day-dreams and unrealities.

Third Point.—In the dissipated soul, while the imagination is ceaselessly at work, the will never fixes permanently on anything, but is constantly changing. It is carried away hither and thither by external objects, which at one time depress and sadden it, at another render it volatile and frivolous. Such a soul is indiscreet in speech, irritable, and inconstant in action, it is the prey of countless faults and bitter regrets.

Fourth Point.—What are the remedies to be applied? If this dissipation arises from a natural restlessness and fickleness of disposition, it is almost impossible to overcome it; such a person should be employed in useful and

pious occupations and be obliged to persevere in them, no interruptions being allowed beyond a frequent renewal of intention, self-examination, and spiritual reading in private, together with silence at all times, except during recreation. Should dissipation arise from interior aridity and disrelish of prayer, it would be well to cut off all unnecessary distractions, such as visiting or gossiping with others, and to give more time to spiritual reading, acts of recollection, and the practice of the presence of God, all impulsiveness in word or action being held under due restraint.

Let each one see how far he has given way to this dissipation, and in what degree it has influenced him in regard of his spiritual progress. Let us resolve to renew our application to discharge faithfully the duties of our state of life, especially those which regard God our Lord; to speak only when and as much as is quite necessary; to take for our motto, *Age quod agis*, and to perform earnestly and perfectly each duty, no matter how small and insignificant it may seem to be; and finally to acquire a habit of making frequent acts of recollection before God.

End with the "Our Father."

21.—ON MEDITATION.

If there is one duty more important than any or indeed than all others for those who would strive to attain perfection, it is the duty of prayer. From a neglect of this have arisen the spiritual calamities of whole bodies of men as well as of individuals, and the Spirit of God declares the same: "With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart."[1] It is by inducing us to become negligent and remiss in this duty, that the enemy of our human

[1] Jerem. xii. 11.

nature most commonly succeeds in drawing us into a state of tepidity in God's service, and into temptations to sin. Hence we should often examine ourselves to see how we are affected with regard to it.

Let us consider the excellence of mental prayer, its necessity for us in our state of life, and finally how we are to reduce it to practice.

The preparatory prayer will be as usual.

First Point.—Nothing is more earnestly recommended in holy books, more strongly insisted upon by the teaching and example of the saints and of the great masters of spiritual life and the founders of Religious Orders, such as St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, and St. Augustine, than the practice of meditation. They speak of it as the light, the food, and the medicine of the soul. Just as the light is necessary for life and the fulfilment of the duties of men, and as without it society could not exist, and nature would be thrown into confusion, so without prayer the soul would be darkened, would lose all supernatural life, and would end in moral confusion and death.

Without also a due supply of food the body would become enfeebled and gradually lose its power of action, it would decay and die; so also without prayer the soul's strength and energy would be undermined, its intellectual power and moral energy would soon become paralyzed and lose all capability of rising above the mere use of its natural powers, and it would thereby fail in attaining the end for which it has been created.

Again, just as the body is likely to decay and is exposed to countless disorders, weaknesses, and diseases, and hence frequently requires medicine to preserve its health and stave off the approaches of death, so also the soul is exposed to innumerable diseases, such as vanity, pride, sensuality, self-love, self-indulgence, envy, sloth, and the like; all or any one of which, unless cured or held in check by meditation and prayer, would soon become fatal in their effects.

Others, again, call meditation the strength of the soul, the source and fountain from which all virtues flow, the basis and column which support and maintain them in the soul. They speak of it as the weapon by which our enemies are disarmed and dispersed, the means of appeasing the anger of God, the key to unlock the treasure-house of Heaven, and the subtle influence which draws down all graces from God. Herein we understand why the saints should so strongly recommend prayer to us.

Second Point.—The necessity of prayer. All are under the obligation of striving to become saints. This law is universal. *Estote sancti*—"Be ye saints."[1] Now, to become saints three conditions are requisite: we must hate sin, we must be detached from all creatures, and we must love God. Yet without meditation and the spirit of prayer we cannot hope to attain any one of these conditions, and consequently cannot fulfil the law.

Further, without the grace of God it is impossible for us to perform the smallest supernatural action, so that in every instant and circumstance of life we stand in need of this grace. We cannot, however, secure it without prayer, and thus we see the necessity of prayer, as our Lord Himself inculcates, saying, "It behoveth always to pray, and that without failing,"[2] and again, "Pray ye lest ye enter into temptation."[3] The example of our Blessed Lord further impresses this same necessity upon us.

Third Point.—The practice of interior meditation is especially incumbent upon us, for many reasons. First, because God has through St. Ignatius provided us with a special and easy method of meditation; secondly, for the fulfilment of the arduous duties of our state of life, we require at all times extraordinary helps and graces; and thirdly, we may presume with reason that those helps will be measured out to us only in proportion to our fidelity in making use of the method of prayer which has been laid down for us.

[1] Comp. Ephes. i. 4; Coloss. iii. 12; 1 St. Peter i. 15, 16.
[2] St. Luke xviii. 1. [3] St. Matt. xxvi. 41; St. Mark xiv. 38.

Fourth Point.—Let us examine to what extent we appreciate this gift of God? Do we practise it with care and observe with fidelity the various Additions enjoined? Do we give the full time to it? Do we seriously apply in our meditations the three powers of the soul?

If we find that we have been guilty of any negligence or have grown remiss and apathetic, let us seriously resolve to correct our fault and to resume our former fervour and exactness. Any neglect in this matter must lead to sad consequences.

22.—ON MORTIFICATION.

The Sacred Scriptures of the New Dispensation in almost every page either directly or indirectly urge the necessity of this virtue. The saints, following in the footsteps of our Lord, have invariably practised it, and in fact we may say that Christianity itself rests upon it and flourishes and is promoted by it. As the vine stands in need of the pruning-knife that it may flourish and bear fruit, so also must every member of the true vine bring forth good fruit by the exercise of due mortification and penance.

Let us consider its necessity and the several motives which must influence us in adopting and practising it.

First Point.—The necessity of mortification is proved to us by the teaching of God in the Sacred Scriptures. Thus it is made a *condition* of *supernatural life*. "For if in the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live."[1] It is laid down as the alternative of condemnation: "For unless ye do penance, ye shall all perish."[2] And again our Blessed Lord inculcates it as a necessity if we would follow Him, saying, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and so follow

[1] Romans viii. 13; 1 St. Peter iii. 18.
[2] St. Luke xiii. 5; St. Matt. iii. 2.

Me;"[1] nay, He tells us that it is the sign by which we are to decide who is worthy of Him.[2] All these passages tend to show that mortification is necessary for all who deserve the name of Christian; what then are we to conclude with regard to those who are chosen to a higher degree of perfection and to closer imitation of the union with Jesus Christ, if not that they should in an especial manner excel in this virtue, bearing about them the mortification of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in them?

Second Point.—Various are the motives which urge each one to practise this mortification.

(*a*) I am a companion of Christ, whose life in infancy and youth, whose private and public career, was one continuous privation, amid poverty and labour, one long act of mortification. If then I love Christ, my ambition should be to follow in His steps, and with St. Paul "to fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh."[3]

(*β*) Again, if we are called to the apostolate, and all of us are so to a greater or lesser extent, we are likewise required to fast and pray. By sufferings even to blood our Lord saved the world, and this hard-earned salvation must be continued and applied to the souls of men through the ministrations of the apostolate.

(*γ*) St. Ignatius made more account of the *vince teipsum*, *i.e.*, of mortification, than even of prayer. This was the lesson which St. Francis Xavier declared he had learned above all others from his spiritual father, Ignatius. St Francis Borgia made it the measure and test of sanctity, as without it no man can excel in the spirit of prayer, or charity, or humility.

(*δ*) Finally, when we consider the heavy debt to the Divine justice which we have incurred by our sins, faults, and negligences in the past; by the rebellion of our passions, and the risings of concupiscence in the present; and the dangers which loom before us in the future, we

[1] St. Matt. xx. 24; St. Luke ix. 23. [2] St. Matt. x. 38.
[3] Coloss. i. 24.

must see the necessity of mortification here or of suffering hereafter. Add to this that the religious life expects us to devote ourselves as victims for the sins of others, and to draw down graces and means of salvation for the souls of others—all which involves the necessity of prayer and mortification.

Third Point.—How is this to be reduced to practice? The chief method of practising mortification is by overcoming our natural inclinations to pride, self-indulgence, and sensuality, and, by the use, as a help to this, of the external penances enumerated by St. Ignatius in the tenth Addition of the Spiritual Exercises.

Let us examine ourselves and see how far we appreciate the necessity and motives of this virtue; also how far we reduce it to practice. What changes under this head are we to make in our present life, &c. Do we bear courageously all those sufferings which befall us against our own will, or which we voluntarily assume whether they affect the body or our will and judgment? Do we rejoice to see ourselves suffer, without trying to escape? Do we abstain from all superfluity in regard of food, sleep, clothing, &c.? Do we repress any desire of praise, amusement, and greater indulgence? When offended by the words or acts of others, do we keep silence? Do we try to remove unpleasantness by some favour or gracious act on our part, or do we at all events pass it over and even find some excuse for it?

23.—ON CHARITY.

On this very practical subject we may consider the importance of striving to practise it in a perfect degree; the urgent motives which prompt us to do so; and the qualities by which it is to be distinguished.

First Point.—The importance of the virtue of charity. This is made clear by the fact that it is the first com-

mandment which God has engraved on the human heart, and has ever been most earnestly recommended by Him.

(α) In the New Dispensation, the love of our neighbour and of God Himself are placed in the same rank.[1] Nay, God has insisted most on the love of our neighbour, and has made it the test of our love of Himself. He even requires of us that we love our enemies;[2] and that we should be ever striving to attain the perfection of that love for others which Christ has had for us.[3]

(β) Not content with this, in His last discourse with His Apostles our dear Lord specifies charity as the mark by which the world was to know that we are His disciples;[4] at the General Judgment it is to be rewarded by the eternal possession of God, whilst its non-observance is to be visited by everlasting punishment.

Second Point.—The qualities of charity. Our Blessed Lord manifests the qualities which, by His own example, charity must possess.

(α) His charity was ever *active,* in healing the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the lame, the sick, and the dead. We should practise this in a spiritual sense as occasions may and will often present themselves; and sometimes also we can exercise corporal works of mercy.

(β) His charity was *patient.* So must we also suffer in our care for souls; we shall have to employ plans, industries, and means to overcome obstacles; and must sacrifice conveniences, health, and even self. So did our Blessed Lord. We must be ashamed to show less earnestness in the cause of the salvation of our neighbour than the devil does for his destruction.

(γ) Our Lord's charity was *compassionate* and sympathetic. He took upon Him all our infirmities in its exercise.[5] He bore with rudeness, coarseness, infirmities,

[1] Comp. St. Matt. xix.—xxii.; Romans xiii.; Galat. v.; St. James ii. 8; St. Mark xii.; 1 St. Peter ii.

[2] St. Matt. v. 44; St. Luke vi. 27.

[3] St. John xiii. xv.

[4] St. John xiii. 35.

[5] Hebrews v. 2.

heedlessness, frivolity, and selfishness; all of these deserving pity rather than contempt and aversion. With heroic meekness He remained patient under obstinacy, ingratitude, cowardice, treachery, and deceit.

Third Point.—The grounds of true charity. (α) We must love others, because they are the objects of the intense love of God the Father, and because they are members of the mystical body of God the Son, and because they are the consecrated temples of God the Holy Ghost.

(β) Again, they are made to the image and likeness of God, and consequently if we love the reality, we must of necessity love that which bears its stamp and resemblance.

(γ) Our neighbours are created to live and reign with us in eternal glory, are co-heirs with us of God and of His well-beloved Son, have been redeemed from slavery, and have been purchased by the same life-blood.

(δ) Lastly, our Blessed Lord has made them substitutes for Himself as the objects for our charity, and declares that our conduct towards them will be regarded as if it were shown towards Himself.[1]

(ε) If we study the lives and conduct of the saints, we find that all, without exception, have been remarkable for their spirit of charity. It was in this that the Christians from the earliest times have gloried; this spirit has always animated Holy Church, and has raised up Religious Orders of both sexes for the promotion of every kind of charity whether corporal or spiritual; and at times men of saintly character have melted down the sacred vessels to provide themselves with means of charity.

Fourth Point.—The marks of true charity. Among such marks are readiness to suffer with those who are in pain, and rejoice with those who are happy and successful; in act and in speech to treat our neighbour as we ourselves would wish to be treated by him; to prefer the ease and comfort and success of others to our own,

[1] St. Matt. x. 42.

to show unfeigned reverence and respect towards others, to repay evil with good in word and deed, to think well of others.

Let us examine and see how we stand in all these respects. Do we treat others with reverence and respect, as the children of God and representatives of Christ? Do we shut our eyes to their faults and defects? Do we think and speak well of them, and act kindly and considerately towards them? Do we put ourselves to inconveniences and sacrifice ourselves for them? Do we sympathize with them and try to promote their interests and their success? Do we give way to any special attachment and thus expose holy charity to danger, or yield to feelings of special aversion?

If we find that there is anything to correct in these respects, let us regret and amend it at once. Let us pray in conclusion, that the God of all charity will inflame us with the fire of His love that we may be consumed with Christian charity.

End with the "Our Father."

24.—ON THE USE OF TIME.

The importance of examining ourselves in this matter is evident, when we see how recklessly time is wasted and too often abused, and how, by many, the chief endeavour is "to kill time." If we shall be accountable before God for every idle word, and this thought has made even saints tremble, how much more serious will be the account which we shall have to render for the waste and abuse of time? This may be effected not only by doing nothing, but also by employing our time in things which no way concern us, or by discharging our actions in a bad or imperfect manner. How grievous this fault is may be better understood by considering the great value of time, the singular providence of God with

regard to it, and the shortness and uncertainty of the tenure of it.

First Point.—The value of time. It is one of God's greatest gifts to man, inasmuch as without it all natural action would be impossible, and in the supernatural order there could be no merit. Again, on its right use depends our eternal happiness.

In every minute of time a man may obtain pardon for his sins, no matter how many and grievous they perhaps have been; he may, by God's grace, be freed from the slavery of the devil and restored to the friendship of God, and instead of Hell may regain his lost inheritance of glory.

As every minute of our lives is a grace purchased for us by the Incarnate Son of God in the crib and on the Cross, and consequently by His Sacred Blood, let us beware of sacrificing any part of it, lest by so doing we waste and squander that Precious Blood.

Second Point.—Let us consider God's *providence in regard of time*. In His dealing with man our bountiful God is most generous in every detail. The whole of Nature bears testimony to this. The senses of our bodies, the faculties of our souls, the variety and multitude of the temporal goods with which He surrounds us, the countless inspirations of mind and aspirations of the heart with which He is constantly favouring us, are evidences of His thoughtfulness and prodigality of generosity: but with regard to time He gives it only from instant to instant: nor does He ever promise to any man a repetition or continuance of it, so that no man can promise himself five minutes more of life than he actually possesses. Each minute as it becomes present is ours, and our eternity in a certain sense and our glory to a certain degree depends upon the use we make of it, so that every quarter of an hour may add immensely to our happiness or misery for all eternity. How solemn a thought is this! Its solemnity rendered the saints so scrupulous in their husbanding of time; it caused them

to shorten even the hours of necessary relaxation and sleep, and to keep their minds and hearts ever concentrated on God. It is this thought which as the worm of conscience torments the lost souls, who will for ever bewail the abuse which they made of time when it was placed at their command.

Third Point.—The shortness and uncertainty of time. The Holy Scriptures are full of warnings with respect to this point. The days of man are short,[1] and they are filled with many miseries.[2] Nay, time itself is short.[3] It passeth as a cloud over the face of heaven, as an arrow from the bow, as a ship across the bosom of the waters, or as the spring-flowers of the field. By these and other comparisons does the Spirit of God impress this truth upon us.

As regards the uncertainty of its tenure, our dear Lord in His parables urges this truth upon us, thereby to guard us against any waste of it and impel us to employ it well. Nay, He declares that He will come like a thief in the night, when we least expect it: that we may suddenly lose everything which for so long we have been amassing: that as a bridegroom He may surprise us whilst we are asleep. Does not daily experience, especially of late years, impress this uncertainty of life upon us by the vast number of sudden deaths in our midst? And this in the case of persons of every age, state, and condition.

As the years which have passed have left nothing behind them but a vague and distant remembrance, so will it be with those that are still to come. If we abstract the hours spent in sleep, in taking our meals, in our amusements, our unnecessary recreations, and other merely natural actions, those former days of infancy and early youth, besides the years spent in sin, alas! to what small proportions is that life reduced which we have spent in preparing for Heaven, in any way worthy of so great a prize. Of what dire necessity is it then that we should spend the rest of our time far otherwise. But

[1] Job xiv. 5. [2] Job xiv. 1. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 29.

how are we to use it? (1) We must keep steadily faithful to our spiritual duties; (2) fulfil the obligations of our temporal state; (3) perform what we owe to our position in life; (4) dispose well of our spare time; (5) and everything we do must be done in a spirit of faith and love.

25.—ON MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

As the world has its maxims and principles by the adoption and by the application of which the spirit of the world is preserved, fostered, and promoted, so too they that are not of the world, but are anxious to cultivate an opposite spirit, must have their maxims and principles, by observance of which they may securely attain that which is the will of God, namely, their sanctification.[1]

1. To be men, it is our duty to act in all things according to reason.

To be Christians, we must crucify our vices and concupiscences.

To be saints, we must die to ourselves and lead lives conformable to Jesus Christ.

2. It is a delusion to expect to become saints in a day. To attain sanctity we must mount step by step like the man who ascends a ladder. On the way we must not be surprised or discouraged if we frequently make a slip or actually fall. To grieve unduly or to lose heart is often the effect of pride and mere annoyance at finding ourselves weaker and frailer than we like to acknowledge; it is a great danger and obstacle in the way of perfection. We must imitate the person who has fallen down on his way along. He picks himself up as soon as possible and hurries forward, instead of remaining on the ground to spite himself for falling, as this only defeats his object.

3. We must accept it as a principle that "great things depend on small, and small things lead to great."

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 7.

Hence we must never delude or flatter ourselves with the thought, that "it is only a small inspiration which I have rejected, only a trifling act of mortification which I have neglected." Let us on the contrary be fully persuaded that nothing which can contribute to eternal salvation is small: and that the most insignificant action of a person who is in the grace and friendship of God is capable of meriting an eternal increase of glory. Of this we have instances in Jesus and Mary, the greater part of whose lives were spent in the performance of actions which according to the estimation of men were but trivial and of no great account.

4. We must avoid dissipation, and unnecessary and unprofitable recreation. Let us rather take that care of our souls which we take of our bodies in cold and wintry weather. We then close our doors and windows, and make up a good fire. So let us close the doors and windows of our soul by restraining our eyes from idle curiosity and promiscuous reading, and our tongues from useless conversation: let us deny ourselves all unprofitable visiting or meddling in things which do not concern us; and let us by prayer and union with God nourish within us the love of holy converse with God and the fire of Divine charity.

5. We must always bear in mind that saying of St. Bernard: "In our human affections, there must be nothing above God, nothing equal to God, and nothing that shares the heart with God. He will never be content to share our hearts with anything created, but is a jealous lover who will not be content unless we love Him with our whole heart and mind and soul."[1]

6. Just as we must always wind up a clock, if the hands are to move round and tell us the hour, and as we must be ever weeding the ground, or it will cease to produce fruits or flowers, so must we by vigilance in watching and in rooting out our vicious or wayward inclinations, preserve our souls pure and make advance in the way of perfection.

[1] Prov. xxiii. 26.

7. Lastly, we should have frequent intercourse with a prudent director. This excites us to be always on our guard, and it draws down rich blessings from God, inasmuch as it is at once a great exercise of humility and of self-denial.

Let us examine how far we have imbibed these maxims and how far we have regulated our lives according to them; asking ourselves which of them have been most ignored or neglected by us; and determining that we shall observe them more faithfully for the future.

26.—ON OUR ORDINARY ACTIONS.

There is a law imposed upon every Christian which continues to bind him at all times and in all circumstances and conditions of life, and it is contained in the words, *Estote sancti*—"Be ye holy."[1] As by them we are all bound to aim at sanctity it cannot be so difficult of attainment.

1. But in what does true holiness consist? Not in great and high contemplation, nor in long vocal or mental prayers, nor in severe fasts and corporal penances, for to many these are practical impossibilities; but true sanctity consists in the imitation of our Blessed Lord, in the right and proper discharge of the duties of our state of life. Sanctity therefore lies, not in the doing of extraordinary things, but in the performance of our ordinary actions extraordinarily well. Now, to attain this three things are requisite, namely, a right intention in all we do, which secures that our actions be performed thoroughly, at the proper time, and with a right mind; the second requisite is alacrity of will; and the third is diligent execution.

2. A perfect intention is either positive or negative. The latter supposes that we exclude all sinful, and also

[1] Levit. xx. 7; 1 St. Peter i. 16; Ephes. i. 4.

all merely human and natural motives in what we do, all acting without reflection and from mere impulse. This becomes more difficult of accomplishment when the actions are of short duration, or are pleasant and harmonize with our tastes and inclinations. A positively right intention supposes us to aim in all we do, no matter how small and short our act may be, at some supernatural motive: either the greater glory of God our Lord and of His saints, or the spiritual or temporal good of our neighbour, or our own spiritual profit. Thus at one time we may animate ourselves to perform our actions in a spirit of penance for our own sins or for those of others, at another to prove our love for Jesus Christ or for His Father's glory, at another to obtain some special grace or favour of which we ourselves may stand in need, or which we desire for others, &c., or for all these several objects combined.

3. As to the third requisite, or alacrity of will, we should not perform our duties in a spirit of moroseness, or sadness, nor out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver,[1] whereas it casts a reflection upon Him, and is a source of scandal to others, if we look wretched and unhappy when paying Him service. On the contrary, we ought to show our cheerfulness and readiness in all we do, not only in things pleasant and agreeable to us, but also and especially in those which are laborious, unpleasant, and naturally repugnant to us.

We must also be diligent in the execution of our ordinary actions.

This is more necessary in those duties which are of daily recurrence, seeing that from their frequency we are more inclined to perform them out of mere routine and in a cursory kind of way. Such are the daily duties of meditation and of the general and particular examination of conscience, and those special duties attached to the state or office in which we find ourselves.

This diligence must be extended to the *manner* as well as to the *time* in which we perform them.

[1] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

With regard to the manner, we must remember that since we should do everything from a supernatural motive, it is a kind of insult to God whom we serve, that any act should be performed in a slovenly, half and half, and imperfect manner, no matter how lowly the things may be in themselves; and we should bear in mind the maxim: "What is worth doing at all is worth doing well." Again, the peace and satisfaction of doing anything thoroughly and perfectly more than compensates for the extra labour.

And as to doing everything in its proper time, this not only is an exercise of constant self-conquest and a great secret of avoiding waste and abuse of time, but is of itself requisite if we mean to do our actions well and make progress in the way of perfection. "By Thy ordinance the day goeth on."[1]

Hence, that we may perform our ordinary actions well, let us commence even the least action by the sign of the Cross, or by bending of the knee, or by applying the hand to the heart, &c.

If the act be of some duration, let us reflect on what we are going to do, for whom and for how long.

If it be pleasant, let us protest that we do it to please God; if unpleasant, let us resolve to perform it cheerfully for God's sake.

In our chief actions we should recall the faults to which we are more liable in their performance, such as sloth, want of earnestness or of perseverance; and should make resolutions against them.

Finally, we should acquire a habit of some short form which may express a perfect oblation of ourselves and our work, such as, *In te, pro te, cum te, ex te, mi Deus, in sanctissimis Jesu et Mariæ cordibus.*

From time to time, it is well to ponder the example of our Lord, of whom it is written, "He did all things well."[2] "What things are pleasing to Him, I do always."[3] "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me."[4]

[1] Psalm cxviii. 91. [2] St. Mark vii. 37. [3] St. John viii. 29. [4] St. John iv. 34.

27.—ON HUMAN RESPECT.

Our Blessed Lord, during His mortal life, verified the prophecy of the holy old man Simeon,[1] for ever since there has been war between Him and the world, in the way of thinking and of judging, of law and the rule of conduct; no man has yet succeeded in pleasing both, nor will this ever be possible, as our Lord Himself has once for all asserted.[2]

If then we would please God, we must make up our minds to trample upon human respect and disregard the opinions of men, we must reject all fear of what the world will say, whenever there is question of performing our duty.

To this end let us consider how much human respect dishonours and degrades a man and is injurious to his soul, how grievously it outrages the majesty of God, and by what means it is to be overcome.

1. Human respect manifests itself in an inordinate desire of pleasing men or dread of displeasing them, which impels us either to omit the good we ought to do or commit ourselves to the evil which we should avoid. By it our moral liberty and independence are sacrificed, and we follow in the footsteps of those persons or principles which we are bound to despise, or of a certain vague and undefined public which would beyond a doubt ultimately respect us if we acted with firmness and consistency, and which only pities and despises us when it sees us wavering before and submitting ourselves to its tyranny.

Yielding to human respect further betrays great weakness of judgment, for experience shows us that it is quite impossible to please everybody, considering how different and divergent are the judgments and appreciations of men, so that the proverb is always being verified, *Tot sententiæ quot sunt capita*, as many opinions as there are minds. What pitiful weakness is it then to try and

[1] St. Luke ii. 34. [2] St. Luke xvi. 13.

please the less virtuous, less sensible, and positively frivolous portion of the community.

2. Any concession to human respect is, moreover, most injurious and pernicious to those who allow themselves to fall under its slavish influence. It renders all true peace of mind impossible, since on the one side it is attended with constant fear of the world and how it may regard us, and on the other with a constant remorse of conscience upbraiding us for our cowardice and hypocrisy. Furthermore, it exposes our salvation to imminent peril. How many alas! are lost through it! And how great an amount of good is neglected or hindered by it!

Many a poor sinner is thereby held in a captivity from which he would gladly escape; many a one is the victim of a false or unholy friendship, or of false doctrines which they dare not reject through fear of what the world will say, or of the pain doing this would cause, or of the condemnation and contempt they would be exposed to. Human respect has brought others to a violent end by duel or by suicide, or it has held them enchained in mortal sin by the influence of bad company, of loose conversations, by theatre-going, the attractions of the opera, or of dangerous dissipations.

3. The slave of human respect is guilty also of outrage against the majesty of God, who is the Lord of the universe and the Lawgiver to mankind. God is All-just, All-wise, and All-holy. Hence His law is most just, most wise, and most holy, and our salvation depends upon our observance of it. Man is the work of His hands, and depends on Him for the use of his senses, and for the preservation of all his bodily faculties and of every movement of his soul.

Now this Supreme Ruler issues His commands, and man, the worm of the earth, demurs perhaps and refuses to obey! his pretext being the necessity of thereby saving his honour! Are then the commands of God dishonourable? Can He whose judgments are just, and whose counsels are righteous, enjoin anything which is not most noble, honourable, and praiseworthy?

God commands, He threatens with Hell, He promises the eternal bliss of Heaven, and yet the victim of human respect does not heed at all because one will say this, another may do that, or a third is seen to be pained and offended and will bitterly reproach him.

Thus is formed a deliberate preference of the favour of men to that of God, and the crime of the Jewish rabble is repeated and intensified, in their cry, "Not this Man, but Barabbas. Release to us Barabbas and let Jesus be crucified."[1]

The obligation of confessing God before men[2] is likewise ignored, and the threatened consequence of being rejected by Him deliberately incurred. Besides all this, the slave of human respect is in the language of Holy Writ declared to be an idolater, inasmuch as he puts the creature in the place of the Creator, and pays to him that homage and reverence which are due to God alone.

4. It is absolutely necessary for us now to choose between bearing the scoffs of a few men for a brief time here on earth, and the malignant gibes and sarcasm of the multiplied host of devils and of lost souls in the fires of Hell for all eternity; and we must quit the broad road of fashion and of worldliness, or else resign all hope of entering that narrow gate which opens out into the boundless realms of never-ending bliss. If we now at once overcome this shameful weakness, we shall escape the wretched company of those who will one day be forced to acknowledge: "These are they whom we held in derision, and whose lives we esteemed as a disgrace. We fools esteemed their lives as madness and their end without honour, and lo! they are numbered among the saints."[3]

Let us feel convinced that every time we yield to this weakness we rivet a fresh link to our chains and seal more effectually our degradation beneath a miserable and ignoble tyranny, and we submit to a slavery most unworthy of that nobility of soul with which God has

[1] St. Luke xxiii. 18. [2] St. Luke xi. 26. [3] Wisdom v. 3—5.

endowed us. Why indeed should we consent to waste our lives at the bidding of another, not only without any gain, but at so irreparable a loss? And, besides, who are they that are able thus to make us slaves of human respect? They are the vilest and most ignoble amongst men, whose marks of contempt should rather be our praise and glory, and whose praise and esteem would be a reproach and shame to us; men whose threats are empty talk, and whose power to harm us rests only on the weakness with which men yield to them. "Fear not them who can only kill the body, but cannot hurt the soul."

5. What then is the remedy for this weakness? It is that we should from the first modestly assert our independence, though always with uncompromising firmness, especially in the case of forming new acquaintances.

We must regulate our lives and views according to the principles of holy faith, we must live in the practical consciousness of our own dignity and of the duties and obligations which it involves.

This spirit of faith must be kept alive by great fidelity to our spiritual duties, and by a frequent reception of the holy sacraments of the Church. We must also reject with energy the first suggestions of human respect and the first questionings of "what the world will say."

28.—ON THE LOVE OF OUR ENEMIES.

In the New Law our Lord has insisted on our loving not only our friends, but also our enemies, and this both by word and by His own example: and He requires His followers to "pray for those who persecute and calumniate them, and to do good to those who hate them."[1] Now, by enemies we are to understand all those towards whom we feel dislike or anger, whether by reason of certain

[1] St. Luke vi. 27, 28.

defects of character, such as impulsiveness, or pride, or melancholy, or inconstancy, or vanity, and the like; or else because perhaps they ignore that which we consider due to us in regard of respect, service, or charity, or because they bear ill-feeling and act unkindly towards us.

1. If we have our obligation in this respect sincerely at heart, we shall with all promptitude and earnestness obliterate ill-will from our minds, and do our best to promote their well-being and success: we shall at the same time conceal the annoyance they may cause us, and avoid speaking disparagingly of them.

We must beware of betraying any sign or trace of dislike, of impatience, weariness, or anger—nay, rather, we should strive to anticipate them in acts of kindness, seeking rather than shunning their company, and at the same time we should often recommend them to God in our prayers.[1]

2. We are under special obligation to practise this love for our enemies, since it is too true we have ourselves been enemies of God, and that perhaps for a long time, and have by many and great sins proved ourselves ungrateful to Him. And yet how often and how generously has He not forgiven us! And most fully so. Moreover, He has been unremitting in heaping fresh favours upon us. So that, independent of His other claims, He has full right to obtain from us that treatment of others, which He demands when He transfers to our enemies those claims which He Himself holds over us.

3. This love of our enemies is also a useful and advantageous law, inasmuch as it thus enables us to secure forgiveness for our own many hidden and venial sins, and for our repeated negligences and omissions of duty.[2] Besides which it furnishes us with occasions of gaining great merit and glory, from its being the highest and most difficult mode of exercising charity, and at the same time the distinctive mark by which our charity differs from that of heathen nations.[3]

It is of great importance therefore that we should in

[1] St. Matt. v. 44. [2] St. Matt. vi. 14, 15. [3] St. Matt. v. 46, 47.

our meditations, in our colloquies, and during Mass often pray that this spirit may be granted to us, offering up, at the same time, a special prayer for those who have been a source of trial to us. If we find faults of character in those who are associated with us, let us remember that they have also many good qualities, which we are inclined to overlook or to forget, and let us dwell rather on these than on their faults, reflecting how apt we are to exaggerate them unfairly, and ungenerously. How differently do we not, as a fact, view the very same defects in another person if he is our friend, and how readily and ingeniously do we not find some excuse for him. A holy man has observed that as a rule every one has nine points good and praiseworthy in his character, for one part that is bad or worthy of blame. Let us close our eyes to this last, and open them wide to do justice to the others.

It is well for us also to bear in mind that we undoubtedly have our own weaknesses and defects, perhaps of the same kind or even worse, and that we, notwithstanding, expect others to bear with and overlook them. Besides, if others do maltreat us, speak disparagingly of us, or judge us harshly, after all that is only what we deserve, perhaps much less than we deserve; so that we have no reason to murmur or complain. Should it not rather be a comfort to us that we have herein an occasion of gaining merit, a means of increasing our sanctification, and opportunity for imitating the example of our Blessed Lord.

Let us not be surpassed by persons in the world who consider it a part of good breeding and politeness to check all external signs of vindictiveness, aversion or intolerance in regard of others, and who look upon self-sacrifice and repression of feelings as the first characteristics of a gentleman. Wherefore, taking example from the saints, let us henceforth be truly earnest in our love of our enemies, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for those who persecute and calumniate us.

29.—ON SELF-CONQUEST.

Self-conquest we may define as a virtue which punishes and reduces to order the irregular motions of soul and body. It may, accordingly, be divided into that which is internal and external, positive and negative.

1. The *necessity* of this virtue is evident not only from the manner in which our Blessed Lord insists upon it in His teaching, but also from the example which He has left to all His followers. It is further shown to us in the lives of all those who have followed in His footsteps and have been distinguished for their holiness. Our own experience must also convince us that without the constant practice of this virtue it is impossible for us to hope to please God or to avoid sin, and that therefore we must keep the senses of our body and the passions of our soul in due subjection and control.

2. The *advantages* of cultivating and practising this virtue are many and great, amongst which we may mention the following:

(*a*) It enables us to make satisfaction for our past sins, and for those hidden ones which are unknown or forgotten, and also for our daily faults and sins of frailty. The satisfaction thus made during this life is far less severe than that which else we should have to make in the next world, and which would there be merely expiatory and non-meritorious.

(*β*) It facilitates the avoidance of sin in the future, for our passions are thereby weakened and more easily reduced to order, and the soul is habituated to resist the attractions of pleasure, of pride, and independence; while also our undue fear of hardship and pain is overcome.

(*γ*) By the practice of self-conquest we furnish the best proof of the fervour and solidity of our love towards God, and of our desire to become really men of prayer; and we at the same time keep our union with God alive in the soul.

(δ) It is the condition without which we shall have but little or no hope of increasing, preserving, or acquiring perfection.

(ε) Finally, it is a most efficacious means of acquiring peace of mind.

3. *The practice of interior mortification.*—The most important branch of self-conquest is that interior mortification to which exterior penance is only or chiefly a means, and is the less difficult of accomplishment. Of interior mortification we stand constantly in need, from it no one is exempted, and the occasions which call for it are ever present to each one of us, no matter how old we may be or in whatsoever position.

It may be exercised in a multitude of ways, as for example:

(α) By repressing all curiosity about other persons, about their doings, their failings, and their appointments; also all canvassing of their fitness for this or that office, of their qualities whether good or bad. To this we may add care not to be constantly forming conjectures or entertaining a morbid desire after news whether political, social, or domestic.

(β) By avoiding all impetuosity or mere impulse in carrying out anything we undertake; and by being ready to foresee and calculate the possibility of failure, and prepare ourselves to counteract or avert it.

(γ) By either checking or firmly foregoing altogether any excessive ardour or undue desire with which we seek to obtain some particular indulgence or gratification.

(δ) By never consenting to do even a good thing at a wrong time through over-eagerness or mere natural inclination, as for example to sit up at night in order to devour a new book, or to prepare for an examination, or the like.

(ε) By restraining any exciting longing or anxiety about letters, or about some favourite study, occupation, or amusement, and by anticipating those which we dislike, and repressing any solicitude respecting a change of place or of office, or of Superiors, and the rest.

From some of these points we learn how in our daily life we may practise real mortification, and may say with the Apostle, *Quotidie morior*.

4. In respect of exterior mortification various methods suggest themselves, and to be perfect in its practice we must cut off all unnecessary gratification, either from the senses of the body or faculties of the soul, and must be ready to inflict on them some positive pain, as we see in the contemplation of the "Two Standards," the "Three Degrees of Humility," and the "Three Classes of Men." But let us enter into some details.

(*a*) Thus we may deny to our eyes the sight of natural beauty either of persons or things, of worldly pomp or splendour, and even of scenery.

(*β*) We may deny our ears the indulgence of agreeable conversation, or of the pleasures derived from music, and the like.

(*γ*) We may mortify the palate both as to the kind, the quality, and the quantity of our repasts, and more particularly as regards our drink.

(*δ*) We may occasionally fast, may moderate our sleep as to the time and manner of taking it; and practise likewise great exactness in rising.

(*ε*) Fortitude in supporting the inconveniences attendant on the varieties of the weather, in always assuming a modest position in sitting, &c., often costs more than either taking the discipline or wearing a chain or hair-shirt.

30.—ON TRANQUILLITY OF MIND.

1. Peace of mind is a valuable treasure, and for many reasons merits high esteem, while its attainment may well employ our best efforts. The possession of it renders the rule of reason practicable, provides us with strength and courage under temptations and difficulties, and enables us to make progress in virtue. But without this tranquillity reason too often gives place to impulse or feeling, we become inconsistent and fickle, despondent and rebellious under our trials.

2. Among the means whereby we may reasonably hope to attain it come the following:

(*a*) A clear and strong conviction that sufferings are the law of existence for all men and much more for the Christian; as a holy man has said, *Homo natus est ad laborem sicut avis ad volandum:* hence, to escape it is hopeless, and the effort to do so only adds to our suffering. Therefore, the only wise course is that we should submit at least patiently, if not cheerfully: and should remember that our lot is even then far easier than that of others.

(*β*) To have a sovereign contempt for the things of this world, and to regard their loss as worth very little thought: while at the same time we hold the praise or censure of this world as equally beneath our notice.

(*γ*) Not to be carried away by a natural tendency to activity, but to keep it under due control, and avoid too great a variety of occupations. The greater the number of these, the less perfectly will each be performed, because we have no time to bestow sufficient care and attention upon each one.

(*δ*) To regard the duties of your office not as a task, but as a work of love. You will thus take a true interest in them and devote yourself to them. Do not mix yourself up in the affairs of others, for by so doing you

will help neither them nor yourself, but on the contrary injure both.

(ε) Always remember that violent trials and crises come across our lives as surely as storms do in the air, and like them, often from unexpected quarters, and when we are least thinking of them.

(ζ) Banish all anxiety about future troubles, which probably will never arise; and prepare yourself for such as may come with perfect resignation to the ever-blessed will of God. In all events, whether bright or dark, trace the loving hand of God.

(η) Avoid any deliberate venial faults or violation of rules.

(θ) Let your spiritual life be marked by prudence, moderation, spirit, and courage: and consequently when you fall do not yield to immoderate grief, but make an act of sorrow, and renew your fervour. Acknowledge your shortcomings, and conceive high purposes of virtue: but banish any desire of perfection which disturbs your peace of soul.

31.—ON PRAYER AND WATCHFULNESS.

Our Blessed Lord insisted much on this two-fold duty as the means not only of gaining the victory over temptations, but also of driving them away, or at all events of being better prepared to meet them. St. Peter[1] and St. Paul[2] gave the same advice. The saints also in general by word and example insisted much on this as a condition of true holiness. With a like object St. Ignatius prescribes retreats; and special triduums are provided for in the Rules of the Society whereby a spirit of watchfulness and of prayer may be carefully fostered. Nor is this without good reason, for all are too prone to fall

[1] 1 St. Peter v. 8. [2] 1 Thess. v. 8.

asleep in the service of God, to yield to the influence of the things of earth and of time, and to shut out from our eyes those of Heaven. But as, on the one side, it is impossible to gain Heaven without vigilance and prayer, so on the other, if we regularly employ these it will be impossible for us to fail in securing it, for in this way we shall correct our faults, and turn to good account the graces which God will bestow on us.

1. Without watchfulness, how much time will be lost! how many faults and sins committed! A host of cares arising from inordinate affections, and from self-interest, will drag down the soul to earth and prevent its heavenward progress, making it restless and discontented, and driving it for relief into fresh dissipation. By vigilance we are, on the contrary, preserved from many temptations, and the evil effects of external objects and of our own perverse inclinations. We require, however, to exercise it with quiet resolution, with great firmness and constancy of purpose, and solely with the object of seeking God Himself in all things, which we shall not do unless we are faithful and earnest in our daily examens of conscience.

2. The motives which should urge us to this watchfulness are: first, that we shall thereby be freed from that agitation of mind and effusiveness on external things which are inconsistent with the peace that the service of God should beget in us; from the troubles also that disturb the imagination and the memory, and so frequently assail the mind and heart. Secondly, watchfulness promotes and establishes in us a spirit of recollection, by detaching us from creatures, and uniting us more closely with God, by which means it preserves us in the supernatural life, enabling us to see God in all things, even in the most common occurrences of life. These surely are sufficient motives for our being scrupulously exact in all the industries helping towards the good result of our general and particular examinations of conscience.

As an aid to prayer, it is the most useful, most

important, and most necessary of all our duties, for it comprises all the rest, and is the turning-point on which all things hang and depend. This being so, watchfulness ought to be the great *occupation*, *desire*, and *strength* of our hearts.

The occupation of our heart. In the Scriptures it is written, "With desolation is the earth made desolate, because there is none who thinketh in *his heart:*"[1] yet the people prayed and offered sacrifices, sang psalms, and performed the prescribed rites and ceremonies. But all these went no further than the outside: they were simply external: whereas real prayer is essentially interior, and derives all its force from the heart whence it should spring, if it is to secure our conversing and communing with God. When it does this, then all goes well with the soul; otherwise it is mere outward show and hypocrisy, and is positively injurious to us. Prayer then becomes a great difficulty, we are attacked by frequent distractions, weighed down by aridity and desolation, while the enemy of our human nature will endeavour by all means in his power to obstruct it by temptations against faith and hope and charity. Yet, after all, it is in our power to turn these, by the grace of God, into so many means of enhancing the value and merit of our prayer if we could only really pray from the heart. Ask yourself how you stand in this respect.

Communion with God must be the sincere desire and wish of our hearts. It is no less an insult to God than a discredit to oneself if we present ourselves before His Divine Majesty without having any desire or petition in our hearts to put before Him. It is to obviate this that St. Ignatius bids us at the beginning of each of the exercises to beg *id quod volo* what we have really at heart, what we stand in most need of, and what God is most anxious to bestow upon us. Let us question our hearts when we go to pray. Are we really *viri desideriorum*, men imbued with a longing to obtain His grace for the reformation of our lives that we may daily become

[1] Jerem. xii. 11.

holier? In our difficulties do we earnestly seek for light and help from God? And do we resolutely persevere until He hears our prayer?

Lastly, prayer, if properly made, is the strength of our hearts. It enables us to ask, and to ask with importunity; to wait with patience and hope, knowing that at length our petitions will be granted. Such confidence as this is firmly based upon the promises of One who cannot be unfaithful to His promises, and whose power and love are infinite. Let us, then, be faithful, earnest, and constant in all spiritual duties.

APPENDIX II.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY FURNISH MATTER FOR ELECTION AND REFORMATION OF LIFE USEFUL FOR PRIESTS.

1.—ON HUMILITY.

The priest, by reason of the duties, which his office calls upon him to discharge, may be truly said to be the continuator of our Blessed Lord's Incarnation, inasmuch as he is consecrated and invested with power by Holy Church, to extend and apply that sacred mystery to the souls that are entrusted to his charge. Now, in order that he may do this efficiently, it is quite necessary that he be imbued with the spirit of our Incarnate Lord. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,"[1] and again, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus,"[2] says St. Paul. This spirit and mind of our dear Lord is essentially and diametrically opposed to the spirit of the world: and therefore as the world and those animated by its principles seek after honour, display, distinction, notoriety, and what is termed glory, those who are imbued with the spirit of Christ must fly from all these things, despising what the world esteems and abhorring what the world loves. The spirit of the world is pride, the spirit of Christ is humility. "He descended from Heaven, clad in the hair-cloth of mortality by which He concealed the royal purple of His Divinity," says one

[1] Romans xiii. 14. [2] Philipp. ii. 5.

of the Fathers of the Church, or as St. Paul puts it: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross."[1]

He not only manifested this humility in His own Person, but required that His disciples should imitate Him in the practice of this virtue, when He said: "Learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart."[2] Moreover, He impressed upon His Apostles the necessity of this virtue, when He said to them that they must be humble as children, if they wished to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

I. As this was necessary for the Apostles, so also is it for those who are priests. On account of the great dignity to which they are raised, the sacred functions which they are called upon to discharge, and the reverence and precedence rightly accorded to them, they lie in great danger of taking complacency in such honour and attention, of looking out for it, and resenting any failure to show it on the part of others, as if it were due to them personally. Nay, they may be tempted to place their happiness in a flattery and praise, which is often as unmerited and insincere as it is inconstant and transitory. If we glory at all, let it be in the Lord, for that He is thereby glorified, according to the words of St. Paul, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."[3] Let us seek that glory which cometh from the Lord, a glory which is real, constant, and eternal, not heeding any that cometh from men;[4] but doing all things rightly, disregarding man's judgment.

II. The priest must show humility in his conversation.

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, says our Blessed Lord. Hence we find the children of this world are never tired of speaking of self, of their own sayings and doings; they are perpetually employing the first personal pronoun, except where good breeding has

[1] Philipp. ii. 7, 8.
[2] St. Matt. xi. 29. [3] 1 Cor. i. 31. [4] 1 Cor. iii. 21.

taught them the propriety of repressing it. Self-praise, self-glorification is as pitiful as it is contemptible, whether done openly or concealed under the outward form and expression of self-depreciation. The truly humble man ignores or forgets self, and consequently regards self as beneath notice in his conversation, and avoids all professions of self-abasement as well as any expression of self-laudation or vainglory.

But there is a far more sublime humility in reference to the tongue than that just mentioned.

In the public position occupied by the priest, in the very nature of his duties, and the distinctions in station, character, and circumstances between the persons with whom he has to deal, it is impossible for him to please or satisfy all, he cannot help offending some. His preaching will displease some, his way of administering the sacraments will annoy others, his management of church matters, of the schools, of the mission, will fail to satisfy many, while his own personal manner or behaviour will be distasteful to not a few. Some of these will be found to condemn him, perhaps ridicule him, to misrepresent or keep aloof from him.

In such circumstances the humble priest will follow the example of his Great Original, concerning whom it is written, *Jesus autem tacebat*, when in the courts of Caiphas, Pilate, and Herod. "He will triumph by his silence," according to St. Ambrose, or as St. Augustine puts it, "by keeping silence he will fight and conquer all his enemies." Oh, the wonderful power of modest silence! "A wise man will hold his peace till he see opportunity," remarks Ecclesiasticus; "but he that useth many words shall hurt his own soul."[1]

It is by patient and prudent silence that the priest will best disarm his enemies and triumph over opposition: but this is impossible to the proud, it can be attained only by the humble.

III. The priest must also regulate his actions and conduct according to the spirit of humility.

[1] Ecclus. xx. 7.

Not unfrequently the priest is raised above his social position by his exalted office, thus enjoying an authority and pre-eminence to which naturally he can lay no claim; this influence and publicity he often owes neither to natural gifts nor to any inherent qualities of his own, but simply to his divine and sacred calling. Hence unless he cultivates humility, unless he follows in the footsteps of Jesus, he will be tempted to presume too much upon his dignity, to over-estimate his importance, to become imperious, to be over-exacting, and to look down upon others. How many in this way make themselves the slaves of ambition, grow discontented and embittered by reason of their slow promotion, whereas they see others advanced to preferments, and their own merits and superior attainments are, as they fancy, overlooked. Hence arise suspicions, complaints, and murmurs against superiors, to the grave scandal of their colleagues, sometimes even of laymen, and to the serious loss of their own peace and spiritual progress.

Oh! how happy is the meek and faithful priest who accepts his appointment from his ecclesiastical superior, as from the hands of God, no matter how lowly, poor, disagreeable it may be, and who strives with diligence and zeal to discharge its duties, without aspiring to anything higher.

But unless we inwardly cultivate true humility, it is idle to expect that we shall show it in our lives or conduct.

Now to acquire this solid virtue we must be convinced that of ourselves we are nothing, are worth nothing, have nothing except our wretched miseries and sins, and that whatever of good there is in us, physical, social, moral, or intellectual, we owe it all to God. In ourselves, therefore, wondrous little room exists for vainglory, but plenty to fill us with shame and confusion, for notwithstanding the greatness and the multitude of the graces which we have received, our offences, faults, and negligences are daily accumulating. Thus we may truly say that there is no sin, however grievous, committed by others which

we should not have perpetrated, if we had not been preserved from it by God's grace. Surely, we have here more than enough to keep us in the constant disposition of holy humility.

Let us now with these truths before us, review our daily lives and conduct.

1. Do we allow our minds to dwell upon self, upon our natural gifts or talents, upon our imagined deserts, our success in the pulpit, in the confessional, or in society? Do we brood over our wrongs or any harsh treatment we may have received? Do we repine at being overlooked, or at others being preferred before us as preachers, confessors, managers of schools, &c.?

2. Do we cherish desires or thoughts of advancement, of excelling others, of putting them into the shade? Do we aim at show or display, in order to win the praise and esteem of others? Do we take pleasure in attracting notice, or being made the subject of conversation, under the shallow pretext of promoting God's glory and the advancement of religion?

3. Do we ever betray our childish vanity by speaking of self, either in praise or blame? Do we boast of or even draw attention to our work, labours, or success in the discharge of our priestly duties? When blamed or found fault with, are we ready with our excuses, do we show resentment and proceed at once to vindicate ourselves? Are we too sensitive and inclined to complain at not being treated with due condescension, respect, or consideration?

4. Do we seek our own glory rather than the glory of God? Are we depressed or mortified when things do not go as we wish?

5. In which of the "three degrees of humility" of St. Ignatius have we any right to place ourselves? Happy indeed is he who can claim to be in the third, for such a one enjoys a paradise on earth.

2.—THE PRIEST'S LIFE IS A LIFE OF LABOUR.

It is not an uncommon idea that a priest's life is one of dignified leisure; that his profession is respectable, combining a pleasant variety of duties with a moderate competence, and free from the worries, sacrifices, and constant labours which are inseparable from other professions. That it may be so to one who is not really called to that sacred office, or if called, does not respond to his vocation, we must admit, for the holiest of things may be abused: but if the priest does his duty conscientiously, his life is one of intense toil and unremitting labour.

1. By his vocation, he is called upon to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls: he is an ambassador of God, "For Christ therefore are we ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us;"[1] he is sent by Divine authority,[2] and in a certain measure represents the Divine attributes. Now, amongst these Divine attributes, our Blessed Lord mentions unremitting activity, "My Father worketh until now, and I work."[3] God is ever manifesting His goodness, His providence, His love, and is ever co-operating in all that exists. So, too, Jesus Christ works in His Mystical Body, aiding, enlightening, teaching, guiding, protecting, consoling, interceding for us with His Father. If, then, we are priests worthy of our vocation we, too, must be constant in labour, and with Christ must say: "My Father worketh until now, and I work." Again, as one of the Fathers has said, *Homo natus ad laborem, ut avis ad volandum.* He has to labour that he may support his body, and may develop his intellectual and moral being: so, too, or rather much more must he labour in the supernatural order, co-operating with grace in his justification and sanctification, in acquiring virtue, in increasing

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20. [2] St. John xx. 21. [3] St. John v. 27.

his merit. How much more arduous and constant should not these labours be in one whose office it is not only to sanctify himself but others also. For he is the *shepherd* of his flock, and as such must provide his sheep with food, must watch over them, must heal those that are sick, bring back those that have gone astray, and restore life to those that are dead.

He is the *teacher* of his people, to instruct them on the way to Heaven, to conduct them all, whether ignorant or learned, poor or rich, weak or strong, towards their eternal home.

He is the "dispenser of the mysteries of God,"[1] to make them children of God, to heal them, to feed them with Heavenly Food, to provide them with the Viaticum for their last journey from time to eternity. He is the workman, of whom there are few, though the harvest is very great, I may add, to a good priest overwhelmingly large. Yet unceasing as the labour is, and full of anxiety, disappointment, and responsibility, it is rewarded by an hourly increase of merit here and of eternal glory hereafter. As one of the Fathers of the Church writes: *Labor sacerdotis jucundus, sanctus, fructu plenus, omnibus gratus, et Deo amabilis.*

2. But that it may merit all these titles attached to the labour, it must be really *labor sacerdotis*, priestly work.

(*a*) It must be *orderly* and *methodical*. "By Thy ordinance the day goeth on: for all things serve Thee," says the Psalmist;[2] and St. Paul writes: "But let all things be done decently and according to order;"[3] and the Wise Man, "But Thou hast ordered all things in measure, number, and weight."[4] If our work is to be effective and solid, it must be done with method and order, not from mere impulse, nor as the whim or fancy strikes us. It should be regulated by measure, number, and weight: whereby we apportion our time and energy according to the importance of the duties which we are called upon to perform, and we should under-

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 1. [2] Psalm cxviii. 91. [3] 1 Cor. xiv. 40. [4] Wisdom xi. 21.

take only so much as we can perform well. How often does it happen that we waste time and care on trifles, or on things which are of minor importance, simply because we like them, whilst we grudge the time we spend in prayer or in the recitation of Divine Office, and omit other essential duties? How often, again, through imaginary indisposition, or a slight feeling of fatigue, or in our inconstancy and impulsiveness of character, do we dispense ourselves from a regular distribution of the hours of the day?

(β) Again, our work ought to be supernaturalized by great *purity* of *intention*. Of course, the intention which we make in our morning oblation extends to every thought, word, or action of the day, as long as it is not explicitly withdrawn or at least virtually destroyed by mortal sin, which may God avert! but still the more frequently this offering is renewed the greater will be the merit. Lest, however, the mind should grow weary, or the practice might interfere with our work, it may be well to confine the renewal to the chief duties of the day.

Let us remember that we are not labouring for time, but for eternity; not for man, but for God; for our own and our neighbour's salvation; not for an earthly, but a heavenly reward; for God's greater glory, through love for Jesus, and in a spirit of loyalty to Him.

(γ) Again, we should perform all our duties in a spirit of diligence and humility.

The Holy Ghost counsels us, saying: "Let the fear of the Lord be with you, and do all things with diligence;"[1] and again, it is written, "For he that feareth God neglecteth nothing."[2] When we reflect upon the nature of our employments, for they do not concern things material and temporal, but those which are spiritual and eternal; and consider that the work in which we are directly co-operating with God, is the greatest and holiest we can undertake, we must see how criminal would be any negligence on our part. Let us, then, employ all the energies of our body and soul to acquit

[1] 2 Paral. xix. 7. [2] Eccles. vii. 19.

ourselves of our priestly functions as if the whole success of them depended purely upon our own efforts, whilst at the same time we must place all our confidence and trust in God and in His help, knowing that without it, all our labours would be in vain. "So you also when you have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants; we have done only that which we ought to do."[1] We must labour in planting and watering, but we must never forget that it is God who giveth the increase.[2] This absolute confidence in God's help is based upon His fidelity, for as the Apostle tells us He is faithful by whom we are called to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord:[3] because otherwise our efforts would be vain. Of what avail would be our preaching, our guidance of souls, our talents for organization, if it were not for God, who moves and influences the heart; if, notwithstanding our many sins, faults, and negligences, He did not choose to make use of us as the instruments and channels of His graces to those over whom He has placed us? Let us, then, resolve to apply ourselves with all diligence to perform each of our duties as perfectly as we can, whether it be preaching, catechizing, instructing, saying Mass, or reciting the Divine Office, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick or poor sinners: but in all these let us never forget that *servi inutiles sumus*.

This diligence must be especially exercised in maintaining our knowledge of sacred learning: because the priest is the custodian of the Divine teaching, and in this capacity he has to instruct not only children, but also those more advanced in years, amongst whom are not unfrequently persons of sound judgment and of liberal education. He has also, in his character of interpreter of the Divine law, to explain the genuine meaning and practical application of this law, and to adapt it to the circumstances and conditions of his people; moreover, as dispenser of the sacraments, he must be familiar with all that concerns the right admini-

[1] St. Luke xvii. 10. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 6. [3] 1 Cor. i 9.

stration of them: namely, the effects of each, as designed by Christ in their institution, the dispositions of those on whom they are to be conferred, the conditions on which their validity and legality depend. To secure all this, it is necessary that the priest should constantly apply himself diligently to serious study, nor may he rest content with having passed his examinations previous to his ordination. What should we say of a doctor or lawyer who after qualifying for his profession ceased to apply himself to the acquisition of further knowledge?

We are told that "the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth;"[1] and that the people were instructed on their side "to ask the priests the law."[2] Again, it is written, "My people have been silent, because they had no knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to Me."[3] From all these passages we see what the will of God is as regards the knowledge of His priests, and consequently how great is the diligence He requires of us.

3.—THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

First Point.—Let us reflect on the excellence of the priesthood. It is a most holy and sublime state, in which a creature, by his nature weak and frail and full of many miseries, is called by God to a participation in the priesthood of Christ our Lord. Now, this priesthood of Christ was so sublime that it required in Him the Hypostatic Union, so that He should be not only Man but also God; whilst the Victim which He offered was no other than Himself, namely, His own Body and Blood, sanctified by its union with His Divine Person, for the reconciliation of the whole world with His Eternal Father. But our priesthood is no other than a participa-

[1] Malach. ii. 7. [2] Aggeus ii. 12. [3] Osee iv. 6.

tion in that of Christ, by which we are made His vicars to offer the same Sacrifice, as His substitutes and in His Name. Moreover, in a wide sense we may be said to share His office of Redeemer, inasmuch as we confer and apply the price which He paid for the redemption of mankind to the soul rightly disposed to receive it. And therefore we see that as it is far more excellent, more wonderful, and more divine, to absolve from sin, reconcile souls to God, and to consecrate the Eucharist, than to rule over all earthly monarchs and to have absolute disposal over all their possessions, we may form some faint idea of the sublime dignity of the Catholic priesthood.[1]

Second Point.—The two chief functions of the priesthood in the New Law are: (1) the remission of sin and thereby the communication of sanctity to the soul; (2) the oblation in Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ.

As regards the former, it is true that God alone by His own authority can remit sin, but He has delegated this power to the priests of His Church[2] — a power not bestowed on His angels, or patriarchs, or even to His ever-Blessed Mother—a power so sublime that, from one point of view, the justification of a sinner may with truth be called a work of greater excellence than the creation of a new heaven and a new earth.[3]

As regards the latter, what can be conceived more sublime or wonderful than that a creature should by a word be able to change the substance of bread and of wine into the Body and Blood of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself.

Third Point.—How great should not the purity be of him who is consecrated to perform duties so stupendous? It is a maxim admitted by all, that duties holy in themselves require holiness in him who has to perform them, and that the sanctity of the minister should be propor-

[1] Lessius, *De Antichristo*, d. vii. § 24.
[2] St. Matt. xviii. 18; St. John xx. 23.
[3] St. Augustine, tract. 72, in Joan.; St. Thomas, 1a 2æ, q. cxiii. a. 9.

tionate to the holiness of his office. How pure then, how just and holy should he be who is called to cleanse the souls of others, how innocent should be the hands which touch the Sacred Body of our Blessed Lord, how guileless the tongue upon which He daily reclines!

Wholly conformed to Christ should be the priest, who has in His place to offer up daily the Holy Sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. Conscious of his high vocation, he should rise above the consideration and the love of earthly things, and his conversation should be in Heaven,[1] seeing that he is admitted daily into the awe-inspiring presence of and intimate union with the King of Heaven.

Let us examine ourselves and see how far we have realized the nature of our vocation, and its sacred and solemn duties and obligations.[2] What is our appreciation of the various functions of the holy ministry? What care do we take to discharge them perfectly for the edification of our neighbour and for the glory of our God?

Let us ponder those words of St. Augustine:[3] "As in this world there is nothing holier, nothing more exalted than a priest who administers in the way which Christ enjoins, so there is nothing in God's sight more sad, more pitiful, more fearful and terrible, than one who performs his office in a perfunctory and merely human manner."

End with an act of sorrow for past faults and a firm resolution to correct what is defective. "Our Father."

4.—REPETITION OF THE SAME.

The sublimity of the priesthood, says St. John Chrysostom,[4] is so great, that its members are exalted above the Thrones and Virtues in Heaven. Of the

[1] Philipp. iii. 20. [2] Hebrews vii. 26. [3] Epist. 118.
[4] *De Sacerdotio.*

truth of this we may form some idea by considering it in itself, in its author, and in its object.

First Point.—Even amongst pagan nations we find that priests were always regarded with awe, and were held in great reverence, not only by the people, but also by their chiefs and rulers. Besides other objects calculated to inspire the Jews under the Old Law with these feelings, the very robes worn by the priests in the service of the Temple, ornamented with bells and a profusion of precious stones and plates of gold, denoted the sublimity of their high vocation. Yet what were these vestments compared with those worn by the priests of the New Law? To understand this point we must consider the nature of the victims which each was called upon to offer. In the Old Law the sacrifices consisted of offerings of the first-fruits, of doves, lambs, goats, and oxen; of some of which the priests were allowed to partake, whilst others were consumed in holocaust. But what were these when compared with the adorable Sacrifice of the New Law, of which they were but an imperfect figure?[1] In this Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is mystically sacrificed upon our altars, and His priests and people receive His adorable Flesh and Blood, His Soul and Divinity, whereby they are made one with God Himself.

Second Point.—If we consider the priest as he is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Baptism, we see again the sublimity of his sacred vocation. Great indeed is the dignity of our earthly parents to whom we are indebted for our natural life, as under God they are the condition without which we should never have existed, and although this life is short and full of miseries,[2] anxieties, and sorrows, still the law of nature compels us to love and reverence them; but in holy Baptism the priest confers upon us another life, a supernatural and immortal life, and as our parent in the Lord, has also to answer for our souls. He is like one entrusted with the command of a noble vessel bearing on a troubled sea

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11. [2] Job xiv. 1.

a freight of infinite value, and exceedingly great is his responsibility, in respect of the souls which God has confided to his care. He co-operates with Jesus Christ in the dispensation of the graces that accrue to us from the Incarnation, and is thereby engaged in a work no less than divine. For as St. Dionysius says, "Of all divine works the most divine is to labour with Christ in the salvation of souls," and in this sense we may say that the priest's office is the continuation of the Incarnation of our Lord, and that in it he is the teacher, the father, and doctor of God's people in the supernatural order.

Third Point.—The saints have sometimes realized the sublime dignity of the priesthood, and have not hesitated to kiss the prints left by their feet on the ground, and like the seraphic St. Francis of Assisi, have declared that they held it as a duty to show greater reverence to a poor lowly priest than to an angel from Heaven. Nor without reason, for the privileges, powers, and commission bestowed upon the priest have never been communicated to the angelic spirits. Our Lord has chosen him from amongst men by a special election, *elegit;* has raised him to high pre-eminence, *posuit;* and has commissioned him to go forth as His envoy, *ut eat*—not only with full powers of delivering souls out of prison, but of making them to be friends of God and saints, *ut fructum afferat.* In order that he may do all this more effectually, our Lord imparts to him His secrets,[1] He makes Himself one with him, so that whosoever hears him hears Christ Himself, and whosoever despises him is guilty of contempt of Christ Himself;[2] nor can any one raise a hand against him with impunity, or without incurring the guilt of sacrilege.

How vast, then, is the responsibility of the priest! Having been raised to so exalted a dignity, and being favoured with abundant graces in order to enable him to live in accordance with the exigencies of his vocation and to discharge rightly its several and solemn duties, what a terrible account he will have to render of all the

[1] St. John xv. 15. [2] St. Luke x. 16.

graces and special helps which he has received. Let us pray most earnestly to our Blessed Lady, to our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, and to His Eternal Father, that our faith may be ever enlarged to understand better the sublimity of this vocation, and also that our wills may be strengthened and inflamed so as to regulate our lives in a still more perfect conformity with our holy calling.

5.—THE PRIEST AND THE ALTAR.[1]

The highest and most solemn duty of the priest is to offer up the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, and this he should strive to do each day. His mind should be ever turned to the altar, to it his heart should cling, from it he ought to draw his life, and in the language of holy David, his soul should long and faint for the courts of the Lord.[2]

We read with what reverence the High Priest in the Old Law approached to the Holy of Holies, with what scrupulous care he performed the prescribed ablutions, clothed himself with the sacred vestments, and fulfilled the minutest ceremonials enjoined by the Law before offering sacrifice. With how much greater reverence and care should not the priest in the New Law prepare himself and approach the altar to offer the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass!

As a help to do this, let us seriously weigh the following points of consideration.

First Point.—The Temple of Zorobabel was specially hallowed and sanctified by the Lord;[3] it was holy by

[1] "Quæcumque igitur ad divinissimum hoc sacramentum et ad sacrificium incruentum referuntur, altaria, vasa sacra, sacraque suppellex, si non splendida et pretiosa, saltem nitida, munda et decentia sunto. Nihil lacerum, nihil squalidum, nihil vilioris quam decet pretii, in re sacra facienda sacerdos admittat. Optandum quidem esset missam quotidie ab omnibus sacerdotibus celebrari; sed saltem frequenter ab altari sumant Christum, qui eorum in gratia renovet juventutem, et indicent fidelibus dies et horas quibus missa in ecclesia per hebdomadam celebrabitur," &c. (Synod. Westm. I. decr. xviii.)

[2] Psalm lxxxiii. 3. [3] 2 Paral. vii. 16.

reason of the holy prayers and sacrifices offered in it, and also because of the many graces and works of mercy which the Almighty bestowed on those who paid Him homage and adoration therein. It was further sanctified and blessed by the occasional presence of our dear Lord in person. But what shall we say of our churches? They are far more holy, for upon our altars is presented a memorial of all the wonderful works of Christ; they are more holy than the grotto of Bethlehem in which He was born, than the home of Nazareth in which He was conceived and dwelt for so many years, than Calvary on which He was crucified, died, and was buried. In our temples He performs more wonderful works than He wrought even during the days of His mortal life. At the font we are all made children of God; in the tribunal of Penance we gain a higher grace than the Pool of Bethesda could give, for here souls are healed of all diseases and the dead are brought to life again; but still more at the altar we feast on Christ Himself, who becomes our very food. *Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Domine, concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria tua.*

Second Point.—This Sacrifice is the greatest and the most pleasing which can be offered to God. In the Mass, God is supremely honoured, the angels are filled with joy, the Church is aided and strengthened, the living are assisted, and the dead find relief;[1] in fact it is substantially the same as the Sacrifice offered upon the Cross. The priest is the same, being "our Blessed Lord, the Sanctifier and Cleanser of souls, whose place we as His ministers occupy."[2] The action is radically the same, and is such as to exceed all human power. He who offers the Sacrifice by the ministry of His priest is the same who offered Himself in sacrifice on the Cross,[3] and is the life-giving Victim by whom the world has been brought into reconciliation with God the Father; lastly, upon that holy altar it is Christ who reposes as slain.

[1] St. Laurence Justin. [2] St. Chrysostom, Hom. lx. *Ad Antioch.*
[3] Trent, Sess. xxii. c. 2.

Again, in the Mass infirm and weak elements[1] are supplanted by their antitype, wherein Jesus Christ is a real holocaust, a perfect eucharistic offering and propitiation,[2] and "with loud cries and tears appeals to His Father, showing Him the Wounds in His hands, feet, and side."[3]

Third Point.—If it be accepted as a principle that the higher our position in the house of God, and the more sacred the office assigned to us, so much the greater should be our sanctity and perfection; and that the more intimate our communion with Him who is a consuming fire,[4] so much the more active and intense should be our love, then what ought to be the sanctity and love of the priest? He represents Christ Himself at the altar, is the principal Agent, and supplies hands and tongue while the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost perform the action. The priest stands between God and humanity, says St. Chrysostom,[5] presenting our petitions to God and bringing down to us the gifts which the Divine Majesty bestows on us. Oh! with how great zeal for God's honour and glory should our hearts be inflamed when we hold in our hands Him who sits enthroned beside His Heavenly Father![6] Hear St. Augustine, "O sacred and heavenly mystery, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost perform through you (priests)." The same God who rules in Heaven and is upholding and guiding the universe, is held by us in our hands at the altar. "Heaven is amazed at the sight, earth wonders, humanity is awe-stricken, the devil trembles, and the angels adore."[7]

With what humility and profound reverence then should we approach to the holy altar. Conscious as we must be of our many sins, offences, and negligences, we might well dread to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, were it not that our faith teaches us that "He who has called us is faithful," and will give us the graces necessary for

[1] Galat. iv. 9. [2] Trent, Sess. xxii. c. 3.
[3] St. Laurence Justin, *De Euch.* c. 27.
[4] Deut. iv. 24. [5] Hom. v. in Joan.
[6] St. Chrysostom, *De Sacerd.* iii. c. 4. [7] St. Augustine, in Psalm. tr. 1.

us to discharge duly the functions of that vocation if we earnestly and practically will it.

Let us seriously examine ourselves on our method of preparation and thanksgiving for Mass, and see what is to be changed and improved in regard to both. Do we adhere strictly to the rubrics for Mass, and offer it with due attention and devotion? Do we avoid all mannerisms, and everything which is calculated to attract attention on the part of those who are present? If we find that we have been faulty, let us grieve over it and resolve at once to correct ourselves.

End with the "Our Father."

6.—THE PRIEST IN THE PULPIT.[1]

Another important duty of the priesthood is to preach.

First Point.—This is a commission given by Christ Himself, as we read in St. Matt. x. and also St. Mark xvi. And St. Paul[2] assures us that it is by teaching faith is propagated and the service of God secured and promoted. It is for this that our Lord chooses out His ministers, as He reminds us, "I have chosen you and placed you that you go forth and bear fruit, and that your fruit may remain."[3] It is the duty of the priest to promote the health and beauty of the Body of Christ in its members,

[1] "Quum verbi Dei prædicatio sit unum ex præcipuis Sacerdotis muneribus, indeque magna ex parte salus animarum et sanctificatio dependeant, necesse est ut juvenes sanctum prædicationis exercitium jam in Seminario edoceantur. Attente legant S. Augustini libros, 'de Catechizandis Rudibus,' et 'De Doctrina Christiana,' et instructiones, S. Caroli, ut animus ipsis addatur ad acquirendum majorem pietatem, necnon spiritum orationis et doctrinæ profectum, considerantes qualis Evangelii præco esse debeat, ut felicem sui laboris exitum sperare possit. Evangelii præco semper memor sit præceptorum S. Caroli. 'Elocutionis genus exquisitum ne affectet, fucum omnem fugiat . . . inflata oratione ne utatur, sed gravi. . . . Consideret se piscatorem hominum esse; nervos omnes intendere debet ut animas pereuntium Christo Domino lucrifaciat.'" (Synod. Westm. IV. decr. ix. n. 14.)

[2] Romans x. [3] St. John xv.

to repel its enemies, and to enable them to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason for the hope that is in them. All of which is done by preaching. The pastor who is incompetent to fulfil this duty, exposes his people to the danger of being seduced by the countless false systems of science and religion by which they are perpetually assailed. Hence it is necessary, that he should have sufficient learning; in fact, this was made a condition of our ordination. The world expects it of us, as is proved by men of all classes, ages, and conditions coming to us to refresh their souls.

Second Point.—In announcing the Word of God, we must follow the advice of the Synod of Westminster,[1] eschewing empty and inflated declamation, which disedifies the faithful and is fatal to the preacher. The Holy Spirit does not stand in need of rhetorical or literary parade.[2] The style should be adapted to the audience, and we should strive after the sublime simplicity of our Lord Himself. We have not to preach ourselves, which, says St. Chrysostom, is a sacrilege, but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified; nor act the part of a stage-player in the pulpit. Hence, we must avoid all clap-trap, all devices to gain applause, all subjects which are calculated to excite idle curiosity, or which are chosen for the sole purpose of attracting a crowd. To do any of these things is not to preach Christ, but to turn the Christian pulpit into a platform or stage, and is to barter souls for earthly gain or the gratification of vanity. Will not such preachers find on the Judgment Day that by their discourses they have failed to gain souls, and for themselves have lost Heaven?

Third Point.—For this duty, and to acquit ourselves well in it, we must of necessity make due preparation.[3] This is done *remotely* by great care and fidelity in performing our daily meditation and cultivating union with God; by a diligent study of the Sacred Scriptures, more especially of the New Testament, and of some of the

[1] P. 237, decr. 12. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 5. [3] Leo XIII. Instruction to Preachers.

more important Fathers of the Church, *e.g.*, Augustine, Jerome, and Chrysostom; by renewing our knowledge of dogmatic and pastoral theology. If ever this learning was needed, surely it is in these times, when men's minds are so preoccupied with religious questions, and the laity apply themselves to theological and philosophical matters which are among the burning questions of the day.

As regards the *immediate* preparation, we should have solely and primarily in view God's glory and the salvation of souls; and in accordance with these select the subject of our discourse. We find matter for our morning sermon in the Epistle or Gospel of the day, which is to be explained, illustrated, and applied to the want or circumstances of the congregation.[1] For the evening discourse a larger choice is given, but it should treat of such useful instruction and strictly religious questions as will render our hearers wiser and holier.

Have we excused ourselves from preparing our sermons, on the ground either of want of capacity, or of time, or again on account of the smallness or illiterate condition of our congregation, or the absence of all taste for study? Such as these are vain and idle pretexts, which do not justify us before God; they betray a lack of holy and earnest ambition and zeal for souls and for God's glory, and are too often a cloak to hide a love of idleness and dissipation. If there be good-will and a real apostolic desire to make our dear Lord better known and loved, we shall find that neither ability fails us, nor the time requisite for both remote and proximate preparation. We must give less time to useless excursions, unprofitable feastings, idle visiting, and a thousand other frivolities, and must *prudently* apply the moneys spent on them to the purchase of books that promote our professional knowledge.

[1] Comp. *Catechism of the Council of Trent.*

7.—THE PRIEST IN THE CONFESSIONAL.[1]

The work of works belonging to the sacred ministry is that of hearing confessions, to which important point everything should be directed: while all the efforts and preaching of the priest should aim at drawing sinners to the holy tribunal. Our Blessed Lord says He came to call sinners to repentance;[2] this being one of the chief functions confided to every priest when he is ordained.[3] It is therefore our duty to fit ourselves for discharging it well, and to devote ourselves to its practice. Hence we may well make it the subject of our consideration and self-examination.

First Point.—The excellence of this Institution is a point made clear, first by the fact that its Author is no other than Jesus Christ Himself, who moreover manifests in it His infinite love and mercy, in thus providing us with the easiest means of gaining forgiveness of our sins, no matter how many and grievous they are, and of recovering His forfeited love and friendship. By confession we are healed of all the sicknesses and diseases of our souls in the outpouring of His Most Precious Blood; when dead and buried in the corruption of sin, we are raised up and restored to the life of grace, though before the slaves of the devil and liable to eternal perdition; and are also reinstated as the children of God and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven.

[1] "Quoniam Spiritus Sancti divisiones multiplices sunt et inscrutabiles, et ad varios perfectionis gradus, alii præ aliis, vocantur fideles, non satis est sacerdotem inter *lepram* et *lepram* scite distinguere posse, quin etiam discernere sciat inter spiritum et spiritum, ne pro spiritu Dei spiritui humano, vel etiam diabolico aurem præbens, in errorem ductus alios secum in errorem ducat. . . . Debet ergo animarum moderator ascensiones cordis ad Deum, necnon orationis profectus, scientia saltem, etiam si non propria experientia, ita agnoscere et callere ut incipientes in via purgativa corroborare valeat, proficientes in via illuminativa dirigere, perfectiores in via unitiva altiora manuducere." (Synod. Westm. IV. decr. xii. n. 5.)

[2] St. Luke v. 32. [3] *Rit. Rom.*

Again, in it we see displayed the power of our Blessed Lord. For He enables man to exercise an attribute belonging to God alone, whereby he does not indeed heal the body or restore its natural life, but, what is infinitely more, cures the countless diseases of the soul, through the office of binding and loosing, which demands far higher powers than did the creation of the universe.[1]

Second Point.—In the holy tribunal the priest is at once doctor, judge, and father of the penitent.

As *doctor* he has to diagnose the various diseases of the soul, and for this purpose he must be well acquainted with and ready in his moral theology, and make a constant study of it, since it is a science vast and complicated, and marked out by positive legislation.[2] He should be careful to select those authors whose opinions savour neither of rigorism on the one hand nor of undue laxity on the other, such as St. Alphonsus Liguori, whereby he will avoid alienating some from the sacrament, or rendering others negligent in its use, and so making it either odious or comparatively useless.[1] Like a prudent and skilled physician, he must point out the dangers and remedies of the spiritual diseases of those who apply to him, and must adapt his advice carefully to their dispositions.

He is also a *judge*, and as such must "decide according to justice,"[2] but yet temper his judgments with love, compassion, and mercy: remembering that he is the delegate of Him who loves sinners and came to call them to repentance, and whose dying words were a prayer for their forgiveness, being more anxious to grant pardon than is the penitent to receive it. Alas! how little do they know the spirit they should be of who bitterly rebuke and reproach their penitents, who by their harshness and irritability drive them away from the tribunal and render confession odious to them, thus forgetting how

[1] St. John xx. 23.
[2] Comp. Liguori, vi. tr. iv. n. 628; Synod. Westm. decr. xxiv.
[3] Gousset, ii. 547. [4] Levit. xix. 15.

our Lord has warned them, "For with what judgment you judge you shall be judged."[1]

Lastly, the confessor is also a *father*. As such he must be ever ready to receive his penitents. He must welcome them with tenderness, compassion, and love, and imitate in this respect the father of the prodigal mentioned by St. Luke,[2] whose example he should ever have before him; or the good shepherd who after long and weary search found his lost sheep, and gently placing it on his shoulders, took it back to the fold rejoicing. How often may the indifference and neglect of the sacraments which many show be traced to the harshness or negligence of confessors in the tribunal of Penance and their carelessness in the administration of this sacrament.

Third Point.—Let us examine ourselves and see how we have fulfilled this office. Do we show great readiness when called upon to hear confessions, no matter how distasteful the work may be? Are we punctual in our presence at the appointed hours for confessions? Do we behave coldly or impatiently towards our penitents, either in word or in manner? Do we hurry through the duty or waste time in conversation which is foreign to the matter in hand? Are we ambitious to attract a large number of penitents, and especially such as belong to a certain class? Do we feel hurt or aggrieved if persons leave for other confessors? If at the end we find upon examination that we have failed in any of these points, let us make an act of sincere sorrow and resolve to amend for the future.

End with the "Our Father."

[1] St. Matt. vii. 2. [2] St. Luke xv. 20.

8.—THE PRIEST AT HOME. (1.)[1]

An important subject for frequent consideration is the proper employment of our time when not engaged in the external duties of the sacred ministry, and the manner in which we spend it. To aid us in such examination we may make use of the following points.

First Point.—The great value we ought to set upon time. In regard of ourselves time is a duration of existence assigned to each one of us by God for the purpose of carrying out His will and accomplishing the destiny marked out for us individually. How limited this is, God has declared through the inspired writers as well as by His own words in the sacred pages: while our own daily experience convinces us of the same truth. In fact, our path lies through a valley of the shadow of death, as we can observe on every side of us. Nay, this truth confronts us so constantly that it has almost ceased to affect us. The result of which is that we fail to attach a due importance to our use of time, and regard even the abuse of it as of comparatively little moment, although both reason and revelation inculcate its supreme value to our souls.

By His Birth, Life, Passion, and Death our Lord has purchased all graces needful for us, and each grace has been obtained at the price of His Most Precious Blood. Now, amongst these graces by no means the least important to us is time, by the right use of which we may secure an ever-increasing weight of glory for eternity, may recover God's friendship and love, and through His grace, which is never wanting, may ever conform our-

[1] "Presbyteria sint ubique vera pacis et caritatis, sobrietatis et modestiæ domicilia; in omnibus fideli populo insigne exemplar 'ut is qui ex adverso est vereatur, nihil habens malum dicere de nobis.' Simplex ibi splendeat mundities; neque in supellectili, neve in ornatu, aliquid luxui vel mundanis affectibus inserviens deprehendatur. Regularitas in omnibus fideliter observetur. Ad horam fixam missam celebret sacerdos. . . . Custodite ordinem, et ordo vos custodiet." (Synod. Westm. IV. decr. xi.)

selves more perfectly to the likeness of His well-beloved Son. On the other hand, by the waste or abuse of our time, we throw away or pervert this grace, and thus in a certain sense squander or render void the Precious Blood of Christ. Now, if it is a terrible fact that we shall have to answer for every idle word spoken, what great reason have we to dread the account we shall have to render of the moments of time lost or misused.

Second Point.—How then is our time to be employed? We have seen that we are called upon to preach, to hear confessions, to visit our flock that we may know them, and that we may be known by them, to supervise our schools, to direct various confraternities which others, or we ourselves, may have established; to visit the infirm, and administer the sacraments to the sick and dying. Now, to fulfil these duties efficiently and in an orderly manner we must prepare ourselves at home by prayer, application, and study. A good, zealous, and earnest priest can, if he will, find abundant time for these necessary duties, with great advantage to the performance of his external employments. And—

First, as regards *prayer:* he will be scrupulously exact in his daily morning meditation,[1] regarding it as a most important duty, and quite indispensable if he is to keep the evangelical spirit alive within him: he will recite his Breviary attentively, devoutly, and in due time, for in this duty he acts as the envoy of the Church to its invisible Head. To these prayers he should add the Rosary of our Lady and other daily devotions which his own judgment and piety will suggest, for a blessing and help for himself and for the people entrusted to his care.

Secondly, as regards *study*. This is in our days a simple necessity, when men in every station of life are devoting themselves to study and to the pursuit of learning; when all are acquiring the power of reading, and in our cities, towns, and villages libraries are being formed and thrown open for the free admission of the public: when labourers, artisans, shopmen, and clerks

[1] Synod. Westm. decr. xxiv. p. 36.

all take advantage of these and other means of gaining knowledge after their long hours of labour. Truly now-a-days knowledge is power, and consequently if we mean to maintain our position and to exercise a due influence and advance the interests of religion, we must possess it: and this is hopeless without study. Not that the priest should devote himself to science; for he is not expected to be a specialist in chemistry, astronomy, geology, or other physical sciences, nor to excel in a knowledge of literature or art; but at least he ought and can apply himself to those studies which are peculiar to his profession, and in these he is rightly expected to be a specialist. It is a mistake to suppose that after his ordination he need trust only to "common sense," as it is called, and shut up his books on moral theology, and rely upon his fluency of speech in doling out moral platitudes on Sundays by way of preaching. Through life he must be constantly renewing his knowledge, just as the lawyer thumbs his law books, or the physician his books of medicine, else he will fail signally in his duty both in the pulpit and the confessional. If we are not familiar with moral theology, our direction of souls will be at least doubtful or hazardous, and without a fair acquaintance with dogma we shall not give proper instruction to the people, but our sermons will cause only weariness and disgust by our constant repetition of the same moral truisms, or by incessant appeals for money, which disedify our audience, and too often only produce the effect of making them close their purses.

Again, the priest who has care of souls should carefully and with reverence read the Holy Scriptures, and have at hand one good commentator on them, thereby to enable himself to answer the difficulties which in our days common labourers urge against them. All this has become now a necessity if we mean to uphold the credit of the sacred ministry, nor is time or expense for books more than a really zealous priest can afford, as one's own experience will abundantly prove.

Third Point.—Let us examine ourselves and see what

importance we attach to our time. Do we husband it with great care? Have we a fixed distribution of it,[1] by which so much time is saved, and self-conquest is constantly exercised? Have we not much to correct in the discharge of our spiritual duties, in meditation, recitation of the Divine Office, and in our other daily devotions? How much of our time is wasted in *nihil agendo, male agendo, aliud agendo?* Have we squandered our small means in superfluities, in journeys, in unprofitable amusements, instead of employing it usefully in the purchase of such books as may furnish us with the learning necessary for our state, and which now can be bought at such moderate cost? If we find that there is much to be corrected on any of these points, let us resolve to put our hands to the work without delay, and let us exclaim with the Psalmist, "I have said it, now I have begun, this is the change of the right hand of the most High."[2]

9.—THE PRIEST AT HOME. (2.)

We read in the book of the *Imitation of Christ:* "Your cell, if you are often there, grows sweet to you; if you but rarely stay in it, it makes you loathe it."[3] But that a priest may love his home, and consequently may abide in it as far as is consistent with the due discharge of his ministerial duties, may diminish the danger of wasting time, and may regulate his life holily, profitably, and pleasantly, he should be specially careful on three points: namely, that his house be kept clean, that it be orderly, and arranged with due simplicity. In this respect, as in all others, the priest ought to serve as a model to his congregation.

1. And first as to cleanliness. This is not only of great importance for the health of the body according to the judgment of medical men, but it is conducive to the edification of the people, who regard the cleanliness

[1] Psalm cxviii. 91. [2] Psalm lxxvi. 11. [3] *Imitation*, i. cxx. § 5.

of the dwelling as a reflection of the cleanness of the soul of him who inhabits it. The presbytery may be small, inconvenient, and lowly, but that is no excuse for its being dirty. Experience shows that neglect of cleanliness in the priest's house is always accompanied by dirt and neglect in the church and in all that relates to the sanctuary and the administration of the sacraments, which is unpardonable in a minister of Christ.

2. In the priest's house everything should have its own time and place. On this St. Augustine lays great stress, for he declares, "Order leads us to God," whilst St. Bernard counsels his Religious, *Custodite ordinem et ordo vos custodiet*—and the Wise Man speaks of God as "the sweet disposer of all things."[1] To some persons order and regularity are so natural, that the absence of them causes them a kind of physical pain, whilst to others it presents such difficulty that the securing of it calls for the constant exercise of mortification and self-conquest.

One great advantage accruing from regularity is the saving of time. It is incredible with what promptitude, and how pleasantly and happily a priest can expedite his work, great and varied as it is, if all is conducted with due order.

This principle supposes that everything is kept in the place assigned to it, from the cooking utensils in the kitchen to the papers in the study, and the books which perhaps constitute but a small library. It should extend to the hours of rising and of retiring to rest, to the time of meals, and to the various other duties that have to be performed at home.

3. In the whole house moderation and simplicity should be observed. The author of the Book of Proverbs puts into the mouth of the Wise Man the prayer: "Two things I have asked of Thee, deny them not to me before I die: remove from me vanity and lying words: give me neither beggary nor riches, give me only the necessaries of life."[2] By the Diocesan Statutes, it is decreed that

[1] Wisdom viii. 1. [2] Proverbs xxx. 7, 8.

all which savours of luxury or worldliness, whether in the furniture of the house, or arrangements for board or lodging, is to be avoided, as also all extremes of niggardliness or extravagance, as contrary to the true ecclesiastical spirit. It is further recommended that a like moderation be observed in regard of furniture, ornaments, and decorations, in dress also and in the providing of the table; that all expenditure be accommodated to the priest's income, so that after paying bills regularly, something should be left over for the relief of those in distress; finally, I would add that the house should be so provided with conveniences as to afford pleasure and comfort to each one who returns from his external labours and duties. This, however, by no means supposes that rooms whether for public or private use be supplied with superfluities or such presents from friends or others, as are more suited to a lady's boudoir or a gentleman's studio than to a poor priest's chamber and study. If there be any prodigality, it should show itself in one thing only, namely, in the library, which should possess not many but at least select authors suited to the ecclesiastical state, such as the best commentators on the Sacred Scriptures, the best works on ecclesiastical history, the writings of some of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church and of the Theologians, some approved works also on Ascetic Theology, also Catechisms, Lives of the Saints, &c.

Such books may often now-a-days be purchased at a comparatively trifling cost, and are quite within the reach of the majority of the clergy, when obtained gradually and not all at once.

4. In regard of visitors, the priest is often called upon to exercise great patience, prudence, charity, and self-denial. If his parishioners wish to take counsel of him, he should be ready to put himself at their service at *once*, though at some inconvenience to himself, receiving them with kindness and affability; nor should he put them off to another time or oblige them to wait unnecessarily.

If they come to lay before him their sorrows or

trials, it is his duty to comfort, guide, and encourage them, inasmuch as he is constituted the father of his flock, and expects them to call him by that title.

With respect to those who come to beg alms, there is need of great prudence and discretion in these times and in this country, seeing that imposture has almost become a science, that promiscuous charity often does more harm than good, and also that the priest has many calls upon his charity, whereas his means are very limited.

It is true, as St. Peter Chrysologus says, "The poor man's hand deposits in the treasury of Heaven that which it receives on earth, that it may not perish. The hand of the beggar is the treasury of Christ: for whatever it receives, Christ accepts as given to Himself. Give therefore that which is earthly, that thou mayest receive that which is heavenly; give thy money, that thou mayest receive a crown." And our Lord Himself advises us "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings."[1] Yet, now-a-days, there is so much deceit, falsehood, and abuse, that the cause of true charity is better promoted by careful inquiry into each case, either personally or by others, before administering relief.

Sometimes the visitors will be brother priests, or benefactors, or friends. Such should be welcomed with special kindness and amiability, with generous and well-regulated charity, yet not to the detriment of becoming moderation or to the loss of time.

As regards the other sex, the visits should be short and far between; and it is to be recommended that, when possible, such persons should not be received in private or without witnesses—*ut evitetur lucrum cessans, vel damnum emergens, vel periculum sortis.* This was the maxim of the great St. Francis of Sales. Finally, the priest should be master in his own house, ruling with gentleness and firmness, neither over-indulgent nor despotic.

[1] St. Luke xvi. 9.

10.—THE PRIEST IN HIS PARISH.

Our Blessed Lord says in the Parable of the Good Shepherd: "I know My sheep and My sheep know Me;" and again, "Them also must I bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd."[1] From which we may conclude that whoever has care of souls must know his people, and they also must know him, and moreover, that he must go in search of those who have gone astray and are out of the fold, and must endeavour by all means to bring them back to the Church. To stir up our zeal and charity in this respect, it may be well to make use of the following consideration.

First Point.—In order that the priest may satisfy his duty towards those whose souls are confided to his keeping, one condition is necessary, namely, that he should *know* them. For this purpose it is requisite that he should make himself well acquainted with them personally, nor does he satisfy his conscience by staying at home on the principle that if they want him they will come to him; he ought to go and visit them, though when not so employed, he should be found in his house or in church. Such visits are less necessary when it is a question of the rich, or of females who by their education and other circumstances know their duty, and generally do not stand in need of much urging to practise their religion. With such persons little good is to be done, much time may be wasted, and their friendship is rather flattering to human nature. But a devoted priest will give himself to visiting the poor, encouraging them in their hard and laborious lives, consoling them in their sorrows and misfortunes, sympathizing with them in their poverty, and helping them in their distress. He will show them the happiness of serving God, and the misery of offending

[1] St. John x. 14, 16.

Him and neglecting their religion. If he does this, his presence will be a constant source of joy, will act like the bright sunshine, and will dispel that gloom and darkness which broods like a black cloud over their wretched dwellings. He will soothe their angry feelings, appease their quarrels, settle their complaints, and share in their joys. In this way "he will become all things to all men that he may gain all,"[1] and this he will do for Christ's sake. The rich have friends enough to pay them visits, and will hardly appreciate his calls; but it is not so with God's poor, who are grateful for his attention and are pleased and cheered by the visits of God's minister.

The noblest title which a good priest should ambition is to be called the "Father of the poor." The good priest must be especially diligent in visiting the sick. Any neglect in this respect cannot but draw down upon a pastor of souls the displeasure of God, for it betrays a want of zeal and charity which, even in the Old Law, was punished by the curse of the Almighty.[2] He should be able to say with St. Paul: "Who is weak and I am not weak?"[3]

Second Point.—Our Lord adds in the parable, "And Mine know Me." This the good priest should also verify in himself. Now, it is by his behaviour towards his people that he will make himself known, and more particularly by his conversation, according to St. Matthew's words: "From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,"[4] and in this respect he should take our Blessed Lord for his model. With whom did Jesus converse? Principally with the poor, though He made no exception of persons. What, again, were the subjects of His discourses? Mainly the Kingdom of His Father, His sweet mercy and forgiveness, His love and gentle providence. He insisted on the necessity of holy faith and confidence, and on brotherly love. He inculcated the practices of humility and self-denial, of detachment from

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 22.

[2] Ezech. xxxiv. 2 [3] 2 Cor. xi. 29. [4] St. Matt. xii. 34.

creatures, and of love of God; but never did He treat of idle, vain, or frivolous matters, never of the faults or defects of others, unless duty required it. If He corrected, it was firmly and tenderly—His words were stamped with sincerity, ingenuousness, patience, and modesty—in short, all He said was prompted by a pure intention to promote His Father's glory, it was marked by the gravity which beseemed His sacred character, and was measured by consummate prudence.

Third Point.—Let us examine ourselves on these several questions. How do we regulate our visits as to persons, times, and places? Are we actuated by the motive of God's glory and the good of souls, or by human motives, natural inclinations, and self-interest? Do we waste our time and weary others by prolonging our stay? With the rich are we too obsequious, and sacrifice our principles through human respect? With the poor, especially when they are sick or in trouble, are we assiduous in visiting them to help and cheer them? Do we treat them with gentleness and patience, &c.? In conversation are we cynical, or sarcastic, or do we indulge in ridicule or uncharitableness? Do we disparage others and praise ourselves, or give way to vulgar, frivolous, and worldly conversation?

II.—THE PRIEST AND THE LIFE OF FAITH.

When we consider the various occupations in the life of one who has the charge of souls, the dangers and difficulties with which it is beset, and the constant self-sacrifice which it demands, we see how necessary it is for him at all times to be actuated by a spirit of faith and of real practical charity. Hence it is well for us to make a consideration upon each of these virtues. And first let us consider the necessity of keeping alive the

spirit of faith. *Justus ex fide vivit*—"The just man liveth by faith."[1]

First Point.—By reason of his office the priest is entitled to the highest respect, for he occupies a position incomparably above that of any or all of his parishioners put together. He is their guide and adviser; to him they have recourse in their trials, doubts, and sorrows, and to him they refer, as the precept requires: "From them shalt thou learn wisdom."[2] Now in this lies a real danger, more particularly to those who from previous associations, or their natural disposition, are less prepared for a position of such responsibility and dignity.

Again, in discharging the duties of a preacher, he will often be tempted to avoid the labour of preparing his sermons, or will through dilatoriness or dissipation of mind neglect to do so. On the other hand, he may perhaps spend too much time in elaborating his discourses, from motives of vanity and love of display, not considering what will be of benefit to the souls of his hearers, but what will make their ears tingle and call forth their praise and admiration, nay, often false flattery; whereby in fact he preaches self, not Jesus Christ. Here again is a great danger. As a confessor too he may give way to impatience and irritability, and so frighten and alienate the poor and uneducated, or he may act insincerely through fear of offending the rich. Another temptation is to gather around him a large *clientèle*, and show resentment should any of his penitents leave him to seek spiritual help from another; besides which he is constantly exposed to that respect of persons, which is not according to God's holy will.[3]

If it is a question of visiting his parishioners, human nature will prompt him to visit those who least require him and will least profit by seeing him. On the other hand, his natural inclination will often try to deter him from visiting those who stand most in need of it, and to whom it will prove most beneficial, or even be for them

[1] Romans i. 7. [2] Ecclus. viii. 10. [3] 2 Paral. xix. 7.

the means of conversion and return to the practice of their religion.

Such are some of the difficulties and dangers that occur in the life of a priest. His own wayward nature, the special malice of the devil, and the spirit of the world, all combine against him and spread their nets to entangle him and to frustrate his labours. How can he secure himself against their attacks?

Second Point. — St. Paul describes faith, as "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not."[1] The soul, under the guidance of faith, rises above all things material and temporal, sees through their hollowness, and employs itself in things beyond the region of the senses, yet nevertheless more real and of infinitely greater moment. It contemplates its Creator and realizes its relations with Him, as a Father who in His infinite power and love arranges all for His greater glory and for the glory and happiness of His children. It loves to dwell always in His holy presence, and directs all its thoughts and efforts to please Him. It despises all mere earthly things, except in so far as they help it towards that which, though unseen, is the object of its hopes, namely, its heavenly home. It sees in its neighbours not their riches, their talents, or their attractiveness, but only the objects of God's love—brothers of Jesus Christ purchased by His Precious Blood, and future sharers with itself of a Heavenly Kingdom. It duly appreciates the necessity of serving God and the terrible misery of losing His favour, and therefore it directs its every thought, word, and action to promote His service and avoids the danger of losing His favour not only for itself, but also for the souls of others, whatever may be the cost or sacrifice.

Faith surrounds the soul with a supernatural atmosphere, makes it a participator in the life of God Himself, communicates new light to the understanding and fresh strength and energy to the will, causes it to live in close union with Christ Himself, and to say with St. Paul: "I

[1] Hebrews xi. 1.

live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."[1] It lives in the faith of the Son of God.

"Faith is the evidence of things that appear not." The priest who realizes the truths of faith holds the souls of his people in high esteem, reflects upon the awful conditions of their existence, and the greatness of his own responsibility in their regard; the terrible consequences to himself and to them if he fails to discharge his duties as being their model, their teacher, their physician, and their father. It will not avail him to recite the Divine Office, or offer up the Holy Sacrifice, or administer the sacraments, in a perfunctory manner and out of mere routine. In each of his different duties he must conduct himself as befits the instrument of God, the personal representative of Christ, and the ordained minister and dispenser of the Divine mysteries. Acting thus he will not only steer safely through all dangers, but will convert each of his acts into a means of increasing his personal sanctification and a fresh step towards the perfection of his state.

Third Point.—What are the means of securing the life of faith? The Prophet Jeremias says: "With desolation is all the earth made desolate, because there is no one that thinketh in his heart."[2] To secure a life of faith we must "think in our hearts"—that is to say, our minds must be employed mainly on spiritual things, and our hearts must be guided by the teachings of holy faith, and not by natural inclinations and earthly principles. For this it is necessary that we cultivate interior recollection and union with God; that we foster a spirit of devotion, and that we prove faithful to our daily meditation and our other spiritual duties. Further, it is necessary that we cut off all occasions of dissipation and distraction as far as is possible in our state of life; that we regard life not as a time for pleasure or amusement, but for labouring and sowing the seeds of those virtues which are to grow and ripen into the fruit of eternal life.

Let us examine how we stand with regard to this life

[1] Galat. ii. 20. [2] Jerem. xii. 11.

of faith. Do we rather live a life of the senses, and neglect those things which are of the spirit? Do we make light of spiritual duties, and of the Divine Office? Do we give way to dissipation of mind and pour ourselves out on external things, and gratify our mere natural activity?

In our relations with our neighbours, do we ignore or neglect the interests of their souls, and thus in our dealings with them and in our conversations fail to induce them to study the Life of our Blessed Lord, thereby to know Him better, to love Him more tenderly, and strive after a more perfect imitation of Him? If we find ourselves wanting in regard of these things, let us resolve to correct ourselves, taking those words of St. Paul for our motto: *Justus autem meus ex fide vivit.*

12.—THE CHARITY OF THE PRIEST.

The self-sacrifice in the discharge of his duties required in a priest can only be secured by constant efforts on his part to attain the perfection of holy charity. This is the atmosphere which he must breathe, by this motive must he be actuated in all that he does. The nature of his work requires it, and it is called for by the class of persons amongst whom he has to labour.

Let us weigh seriously the following consideration.

First Point.—The excellence and importance of this virtue is proved by innumerable passages of Holy Scripture. Thus St. Matthew,[1] St. Mark,[2] St. John,[3] pronounce it to be the commandment of God, a new commandment which our Lord claims in a special manner as His own. The Beloved Disciple, in six different texts of his first Epistle, exhorts us to practise this virtue, for the reason that Christ our Lord commands it, and that He has loved us, and that it is a condition of the supernatural

[1] St. Matt. v. 44. [2] St. Mark xii. 30. [3] St. John xiii. 34.; xv. 12.

life. Again, according to the Sacred Text, it is by this virtue that Christ's disciples are to be known, by it also that we discharge the debt which we owe to the brethren,[1] by it again we fulfil the law and draw down heavenly light into our souls.

On the other hand, if we are wanting in the spirit of charity we are in a state of death, are of no avail and nothing worth. In all these ways does the Spirit of God impress upon us the excellence and importance of our practising this virtue. Nay, He seems to insist upon it more than upon the love of Himself, and lays it down as the test whereby the reality and perfection of our love for Him is to be proved. To encourage us in reducing it to practice, He declares "whatever ye do to the least of these My brethren, ye do for Me,"[2] even the giving "only a cup of cold water," and that moreover it "shall not go unrewarded." Surely God Himself could not present a stronger proof of the excellence of this virtue and of the pleasure which it causes Him.

Nor can we wonder, for as He Himself tells us, He loves each one of us with an everlasting love, He has bought us with an infinite price,[3] that of His own Most Precious Blood, and He has called us that hereafter we may share with Him in His glory for all-eternity.

Second Point.—The end for which the priesthood has been instituted, and the powers with which it has been invested, are all directed to the furtherance of the salvation of souls. In this respect the priest may be said to continue to spread more widely and to apply the fruit of the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord Himself. By Baptism, he confers upon the child the life of grace, makes it a brother of Christ, and introduces it into the family of God; by Penance, he restores to the soul the life which it had lost through grievous sin; by the Holy Eucharist, he supplies it with that Food which the angels ever adore, but of which they may never partake, namely, the Body, the Blood, the Soul and Divinity of Christ Himself; while by the last anointing, he speeds

[1] Romans xiii. 8. [2] St. Matt. x. 42. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 20.

the poor soul on its way from time into eternity, and supplies it with strength for its final step. By his preaching, he teaches the science of salvation, withdraws souls from danger, evil, and death, and stimulates them to do that which is good. He is to go in search of those who have strayed from the fold and bring them back to it. Like his grand original, he will often have to sit down by the roadside weary after his long search, and must be able to say along with the Apostle, "I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for souls,"[1] and often, too, in discharge of his duty he will have to brave death in administering the rites of the Church to the fever-stricken soul.

But unless he be animated by the spirit of true charity, this is impossible. He may indeed perform one or other of these duties for a time through natural motives, through kindness of disposition, the love of novelty, a natural activity, or a tendency to vanity, but this will only be by fits and starts and cannot be lasting, nor shown to all alike without exception of persons, whether rich or poor, old or young; nor will it be patient and kind, such as bears all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.[2]

Third Point.—The necessity of this charity becomes more evident when we reflect upon the persons towards whom it is to be exercised. The number of gentle and refined persons in our congregations is exceedingly limited, and these stand least in need of the charity of the priest. His main work lies amongst the poor, who dwell in the midst of squalor, whose manners are often rude, forbidding, and repulsive, who are vulgar and uneducated, and often are prejudiced and mistrustful. Some are unwilling to receive the priest, others are full of imaginary grievances, murmurings, and complaints; others again are obstinate and refuse his ministrations, and will not listen to his exhortations or consent to abandon their evil ways, and to frequent the church and the sacraments. And without great charity, who can persevere for long in such labours amid so great difficulties?

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 15. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

13.—ON ANXIETY OF MIND.

Anxiety of mind combined with solicitude respecting the good that ought to be done, or evil averted, often fills the soul with trouble and restless cares, and is opposed to Christian prudence. It often, if yielded to, produces sleeplessness and bodily debility, diffidence in the loving providence of God, and lack of energy in His service. Sometimes it is caused by the memory of events of the past; sometimes by unfounded alarms as to present matters, or what is to come in the unknown future. Though against all these things our Lord warns us when He says: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," as if He would say, Take note of your cares as they come with each day, but heed not those of the morrow; nor trouble yourself with asking, "What shall we eat?" or, "Who will roll back the stone for us?" and the like; for such cares are the great enemies of the soul, disturbing its peace, preventing progress in virtue, and embittering our service of God.

First Point.—As regards the past, how often do the memory and imagination succeed in causing us alarm on the very slightest grounds. Are we disappointed at not receiving a letter from a friend, we at once begin to fear that he may be ill, or perhaps offended, or may never have received our news. If he is not punctual in keeping an appointment, we are alarmed lest some accident may have befallen him. If we do not receive to the day the returns of some investment, we take alarm lest fraud or bankruptcy may be the cause; and so in an endless number of other cases.

What counsel should I give to others when this happens? I would say, Your apprehension is either true or false. If false, it is unreasonable folly to be disturbed at nothing; if true, all your anxiety will not help you nor affect the result—what is done, cannot be undone. Leave

all in the hands of God, who has ordered everything for the best. That care is useless which only inflicts pain, but gives no profit. If such be the advice we ought to give to others, let us apply it to ourselves. Let us say with holy Job: "The Lord has given; the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." What has happened, was decreed by an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-holy Father, or at least permitted by Him, and consequently may His blessed will be done in me and by me. Behold the only means of securing peace as regards what concerns the past. Again, when at times former sins and faults rise up before the mind and overwhelm us with terrors and doubts whether they have been forgiven, and whether our repentance has been sincere, we must throw ourselves into the arms of God, and confiding in His infinite love and mercy, despise and reject all idle alarms, and exclaim in the words of the Psalmist: "In Thee, O my God, I put my trust, let me not be confounded."

Second Point.—As regards cares about the present, we must, as St. Ignatius teaches, "accommodate ourselves to things, and not things to ourselves." If a sailor sees a rock in his course, he does not wait till it is removed, but changes his course and sails past it. There are some who want to do everything themselves, and leave nothing to others, and go on stubbornly persisting until they learn by sad experience how limited their sphere of activity is, and render themselves useless and incapable of all serious labour. To be over-occupied is as pernicious as to have too little to do; and both errors lead to disappointment and inertness. The body can bear labour, but the mind is soon exhausted by cares, and solid devotion is exposed to great risk amid a crowd of duties as it is in a crowd of people, and will by degrees die out, unless we so adapt ourselves to circumstances as not to interrupt the union of our hearts with God, nor prevent our memory from recalling His sacred presence, by now invoking Him, now praising Him, now making declarations of love of Him. We thus avoid the fault

of Martha, who was "troubled about many things," by devoting ourselves to the occupation of Mary.

Let us consider what our shoulders can bear, and what they refuse to bear; and let us seriously determine how much of our time we shall give to necessary business, and how much to matters of choice; how much we shall employ in helping others, and above all how much should be consecrated to prayer, free from interference unless for some occupation more pleasing to God or more profitable to the souls of others. In this way the number of our cares will not disturb our souls, our duties of necessity will be performed with tranquillity and without bustle, while other works of supererogation will not be neglected if time permits.

Third Point.—The anxieties and cares about the future, however, are far more injurious to the soul than either those of the past or of the present; as they betray a want of confidence and trust in the goodness and providence of God. How many embitter their lives, and drag on a hopeless existence, because they refuse to live in the present, and are absorbed in the anticipation of evils which their imagination conjures up from the dark womb of the future! Instead of praising and thanking God for the graces and blessings which He is bestowing upon them, they are a prey to fears which will never be realized, as loss of friends, or of fortune, failure of undertakings or of health; or else they are preoccupied with apprehensions of public or private misfortunes. Even good and holy people are too often tempted in this way, but when attacked they know how to resist, and feeling that they are in the hands of Him who "hath care of them," and who will not suffer them to be tried above their strength, they abandon themselves to the protection of their Heavenly Father, who has both the power and the will to help them. With St. Paul they say, "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him." They have no anxiety lest the means of support should fail them. The Lord will provide—they care not if malicious

tongues calumniate them, and "enemies stand together against them," they do not lose confidence, for they know the Lord will provide. To them it matters not though sickness or death may loom before them in the future, they are at peace, and are ready with holy David to sing: "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Anxiety finds no place in a soul which has given itself to God, and is imbued with the spirit infused into us in the contemplation of the "Two Standards" and the third degree of humility.

Therefore, my soul, "cast thy care upon the Lord," have no solicitudes about yesterday, to-day, or to-morrow. The first were useless, the second imprudent, the third inflicts an injury upon the providence of God. Anxiety ill beseems a Christian, much less a Religious or a priest. Let my care be to fulfil each day and hour the will of my Father in Heaven, to observe His counsels and precepts, and then He will not fail to take care of me and of mine.

Let us conclude with the words of St. Bernard: "Why dost thou trouble thyself, and why art thou afraid? Behold the Angel of the Great Counsel invites thee, than whom there is no one stronger, no one more loyal and true, no one wiser."

14.—ON PATIENCE.

Patience is a virtue which enables us to bear the ills of life contentedly and with resignation. In considering this virtue we must distinguish between interior feelings and our consent to or encouragement of them. The former are not completely under our control, are often involuntary, and as such are not sinful; but they become this if we deliberately foster feelings of discontent and give way to these by murmuring and repining, and by acts of impatience. Patience is a virtue

necessary for all, and its exercise is perpetually called for. "The days of man are short, and his life is full of many miseries," says holy Job, and our experience convinces us of this truth. Persecution, quarrels, affronts, sickness, loss of goods or of friends, breaches of trust or of confidence, all supply abundant occasions for its exercise. To these we may add the many annoyances and inconveniences attached to our duties and state of life, such as arise from those amongst whom circumstances compel us to live and with whom we have to associate. That we may draw some practical fruit from this consideration, let us examine in what manner we exercise the virtue of patience with regard to those inconveniences and trials inseparable (1) from the place in which we live, (2) from the particular time, and (3) from our general state and condition.

First Point.—If we are by our office or state fixed in a special locality, we must put up with a certain climate, a certain class of companions, and also be subject to a definite Superior. It may happen that the air does not suit us—it is too damp or too keen, too relaxing or too bracing, too dense or too rare. All this we could bear when young, but advancing age makes us very sensitive to weather. Again, the persons amongst whom we are thrown may be harsh, quarrelsome, haughty, rude, unkind, or unsympathetic. In regard of Superiors, they are perhaps prejudiced, choleric, too ready to find fault and to reprehend. They select the least deserving as their friends and confidants and advisers, and leave us studiously alone.

If we are in Religion, other trials of patience present themselves. Our cubicle is either too large or too small, it is too hot or too cold, or too noisy. The food and accommodation are not up to the mark, domestics are disobliging, and in short there is an absence of many conveniences which we find in other houses of the same Order. Such are some of the many sources of impatience to which we may be subjected, and we often are inclined

to think that we would probably escape them by change of domicile.

Let us remember these words of à Kempis: *Imaginatio et locorum mutatio multos fefellit;* and again: "It is necessary for thee, wherever thou art, to practise patience, if thou wilt enjoy interior peace, and merit an everlasting crown."

None of these things, nor all of them together, can harm us, says Chrysostom, unless we harm ourselves. Give thanks to God for them, and this will convert them to our profit and advantage. Moreover, have we not promised our dear Lord to aim at the third degree of humility, and begged of Him to accept us as soldiers under His standard? Is it by murmuring and impatience under such trials that we fulfil our engagements? Let us contrast our crosses with those of our Saviour at Nazareth and our patience with His, and let us blush for shame at our pitiful cowardice.

Second Point.—Difficulties as to times and seasons are another source of trials to patience. We are content to perform the duties of our state of life or office, but only at our own convenience and our own time. What then if obedience or charity should require it otherwise? Should we be called upon in stormy weather to make a journey on foot to some sick person, or be roused from sleep to go and assist the dying, or interrupted in our prayers or studies in order to perform some parish duty; or should we be required to leave table or recreation or some pleasant company in the interest of charity; to endure hunger, sweat, fatigue, heat, or cold, and then seek to avoid all these by an inexcusable delay until another time, this is not to practise patience and self-denial, but rather proves us to be cowards in God's service and slaves to self-indulgence. We do not strive to be masters of times and seasons, but rather allow them to dominate over us. Let us learn a lesson from the children of this world, who are "wiser in their generation than the children of light." What does the soldier do in the pursuit of glory? Does he not readily brave the heat and cold and tempest! and

cheerfully forego food and sleep, or even sacrifice his health! So, too, the merchant in the attainment of wealth; and the sportsman in hunting his prey! How readily do these expose themselves to every kind of trial and inconvenience, and display indomitable patience in the effort to attain their desired end. Let us not delude ourselves that we have attained the virtue of patience, until we learn to sacrifice our own comforts and bear those inconveniences which daily fall to our lot, but rather follow the example of our Blessed Lord, who considered every time convenient in which an occasion presented itself of doing a greater good, and who would have us forego any convenience or expose ourselves to any hardship when the greater glory of His Father or the salvation of our neighbour requires it.

Third Point.—Many trials of patience are inherent in our office or state of life. No matter how honoured the office or how privileged the state of life, it is sure to have its disadvantages as well as its emoluments, its trials as well as its pleasures; and whoever would prefer one to the other, must be content to accept the bitter with the sweet, the gains and profits with the drawbacks. The office is not created to subserve the man, but man the office; so, too, it is not intended that the state of life should adapt itself to the man, but he is bound to adapt himself to its requirements.

From this it follows that whoever conscientiously fulfils his duty will meet with many occasions in which his patience must be severely tried. The office of the priest is beset with these, not only as regards his parish duties towards his congregation in administering the sacraments, especially Confession, in preparing and delivering his sermons, in visiting his flock, more particularly the sick, in urging the negligent and slothful, and correcting the wayward; but also in the management and the control of his schools, in the instruction of the children and their preparation for the sacraments.

The same is true of a Religious, especially respecting the observance of obedience and charity. How often is

not our patience tried by the orders of Superiors, when they assign to us the offices of preaching, teaching, giving missions, or filling positions of authority, for which we feel ourselves unqualified, or when they appoint us to a college or house towards which we have a repugnance, or in which we feel that our health will be imperilled? We are inclined to murmur and complain, or often what is worse, try to bring the Superior's will round to our own, and so transfer the unpleasant burden from our own to another's shoulders. Again, in our relations with our religious brethren, how often are differences of disposition, character, and nationality a trial to us, as also the variety of their habits, manners, and customs?

Lastly, we are not seldom a burden to ourselves amid the various trials involved in the observance of regular discipline and fixed customs, which have the effect of rendering us irritable and impatient. Let us keep ever before our eyes our Blessed Lord, the model of patience, and remembering the words of St. Paul, that patience is necessary and hath a perfect work, let us pursue justice, godliness, charity, and patience, encouraging each other in the practice of these.

15.—ON THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

Amongst the many dangers assailing those who are engaged in the sacred ministry, by no means the least is that which arises from the false maxims and perverted axioms, which are not unfrequently put forward by those whose age and experience should have made them wiser, and who ought to be our models. To counteract this danger, no means are more effective than an earnest cultivation of the cardinal virtues, on the exercise of which depend the virtue and integrity of life; for no act can be really just and praiseworthy before God and man

which is not characterized by prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance. Moreover, their exercise is constantly required if we mean to make progress in the spiritual life, or to acquire perfection in the habit of any special virtue. Wherefore it is well to consider each of these virtues and to see how we stand in regard to it. After placing ourselves in the presence of God and begging light and grace to see what is defective in our practice of these virtues, as also strength to correct this, the following points should be carefully considered.

1. *Prudence.*—This is the virtue by which we form our judgment in each circumstance of life, as to what is good that we may adopt it, and what is bad that we may reject it; by this also we direct everything to our last end. It involves these three points: (α) *deliberation*, (β) *sound discretion*, and (γ) *practical application*.[1]

(α) *Deliberation* supposes that we subordinate and direct all we do to our last end, selecting at the same time the best and surest means to secure it. "My son, do nothing without counsel, and thou shalt not repent when thou hast done," says Ecclesiasticus.[2] The prudent man weighs the claims and rights of God in his regard, and also his duties towards his fellow-man; he considers how these are to be best satisfied in the circumstances, what difficulties are to be surmounted, what means to be adopted, what prejudices to be removed, what inclinations to be repressed. In case of doubt, he will seek the advice of others, following the counsel of the Spirit of God: "Lean not upon thy own prudence."[3]

(β) *Sound Discretion.*—The prudent man does not select at hazard any means for the attainment of the end he has in view, but under the guidance of holy faith, he chooses that which recommends itself as the most sure, the safest, and the most efficacious. He will by this means secure success, will remove all grounds for self-reproach or distress of mind, and by his foresight will guard against all unforeseen difficulties.

[1] Comp. St. Thomas, 2a 2æ, q. 50. &c. [2] Ecclus. xxxii. 24.
[3] Prov. iii. 5.

(γ) *Practical application.*—True prudence requires execution, besides counsel and judgment. Often there is great danger in delay, lest by putting off, fresh circumstances may arise which may prove insurmountable. Again, from procrastination springs inconstancy, not unfrequently attended by the loss of influence and authority. We should strike the iron while it is hot. When once the mind has shown us our duty, a well-regulated soul will not hesitate to perform it.

Let us examine ourselves and see how we observe this virtue. Do we act from impulse, or on the spur of the moment, being influenced by passion or mere feeling, as the animal creation which has no understanding? Do we expose ourselves and forfeit the respect and esteem of others by neglecting to make use of our judgment, and doing things which right reason cannot approve, and which others must reasonably condemn? Do we give way to procrastination and dilatoriness, whereby much good is left undone, time is wasted, and the soul is harassed by self-reproach? If we find that we have erred in regard of this virtue, let us resolve to correct ourselves, and let us bear the axiom in mind: *Dimidium facti, qui bene cœpit, habet.*

2. *Fortitude.*—This is sometimes used to express a necessary quality of all real virtue, namely, firmness of purpose in all that is virtuous and good: but in a more restricted sense, it expresses that state of the soul which disposes it to exercise a firm control over reason and will, in face of all difficulties, and death itself, and to restrain all excess of fear or rashness; and has for its foundation hope in the protection of God.

It prompts a man to do great things for God's sake, and even to ambition occasions of heroism. It inclines us rather to aim at excess in the practice of all virtues, than to be content with mediocrity, and it requires the rein rather than the spur. Fortitude is deaf to the whisperings of fear, to the countless excuses of poor human nature, by which one would avoid all labour and fatigue, all trouble, anxiety, and mortification; and it is

unaffected by the promptings of self-love and self-ease. Its maxim is that of St. Paul: "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's;"[1] and again: "Let us work whilst it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work."[2]

Fortitude enables us also to suffer greatly for God. Fewer distinguish themselves by suffering than by their actions, because the latter are often attended by glory, whereas suffering is unseen and unknown, is opposed to our natural inclinations, and is contrary to self-will; and consequently we find fewer heroes on Calvary than on Thabor. But each is a spectacle well pleasing to God and man. The man of fortitude bravely welcomes sufferings and hardships, and trusting in God, will, like St. Ignatius, welcome death by wild beasts, or like St. Lawrence, will smile when placed on the gridiron.

Let us examine how we stand in regard of this virtue. Are we ready to do great things for God and our neighbour? Do we cheerfully spend our time and strength in promoting their interests? Or do we not rather give way to idleness and self-ease and self-indulgence on the ground that age or health require it? Have we often shrunk from pain and suffering, or been conquered by opposition and difficulties, to which the true friends of God are so much exposed? Are we easily betrayed into cowardice and fear without any cause? Or, on the other hand, bold to rashness and regardless of the dictates of common prudence? Is our fortitude attended by a calm confidence, patience, and perseverance? If we are conscious of any fault in these respects, let us with God's grace resolve to correct it.

3. *Justice.*—This virtue consists in the habitual disposition of our will to render to each one that which is his due; and it is divided into four species:

(*a*) By commutative justice, we are bound in interchange of goods to render the exact equivalent, unless compensation be wholly or in part remitted. Between us and

[1] Romans xiv. 8. [2] St. John ix. 4.

God an act of this kind of justice is impossible, seeing that we cannot offer condign satisfaction for the offences of which we have been guilty, nor make due reparation for the injury we have done Him. The Son of God undertook this obligation in His own person; and if we are to become sharers in this grace, we must fulfil the condition which He has laid down, that of rendering the "worthy fruits of penance." According, therefore, to the measure of our sins, should be the amount of our stripes, and according to our indulgence in unlawful pleasures, should be our abstinence from those that are lawful.

(β) Distributive justice requires that we observe due proportion in the partitioning out of duties, emoluments, and burdens as far as depends upon us, and for ourselves rest content with such as are assigned to us by lawfully constituted authority.

We practise this virtue when we preserve a proper mean between the claims of our soul and body; giving precedence to the former in all things and treating the latter along with its different senses with due severity, making it in all things subservient to the soul. Again, this virtue requires that we regulate the exercise of our memory, understanding, and will, in subservience to the law of our Creator and Heavenly Father, and that we consequently allow them only such freedom of action as is necessary to enable them to perform their functions most efficiently.

How often, alas! do we on the contrary sacrifice the soul to the body, and provide for the comfort and gratification of the latter at the soul's expense. If we bestowed half the pains and care upon the well-being of the soul that we do upon the comfort of our body, how soon should we become just!

(γ) Legal justice requires that each part should accommodate itself to the benefit of the whole, and should employ its energies to promote the common good. Now the common good is secured by the observance of rule and regular discipline. Every one of us then as

being the member of a religious community or of the body of the secular clergy, is bound by this virtue to promote according to his position, in word and example, the observance of the Rules of our Order or state in life, and to remove as far as possible anything that endangers their violation. This virtue has no enemy so great as a negligent Religious or an indifferent ecclesiastic, and consequently there does not exist any greater source of scandal, or more bitter enemy of the glory of God and the good of souls.

(δ) Vindicative justice demands that punishment shall be proportionate to the fault. We greatly fail, alas! in this respect! How often under the influence of anger or impatience do we deal harshly and unjustly with penitents in the sacred tribunal, with children in our schools, with inferiors or servants! How hard and unsparing are we in our words and actions in regard to the failings and shortcomings of others! But, alas, how loath to punish ourselves! How often does our conscience accuse us of guilt, while yet we remain deaf to its voice. We are zealous of justice in regard of others, but not so in regard of ourselves. It is surely high time to get rid of this delusion.

4. *Temperance*, in its wide sense, may be defined as the virtue by which the affections of the soul are restrained within the limits prescribed by faith and right reason; or in a stricter sense, by which the sensual appetites are kept under control, especially as regards food, drink, and habits of modesty.

Whatever indulgence we grant to our senses and to our bodies, is in its proportion detrimental to the soul; it diminishes the familiarity and confidence which should mark our intercourse with God, seeing that He turns away from the carnal man, in whom the Divine Spirit is either languishing or has ceased to dwell.

Again, the sensual man finds no comfort in conversation with God, according to St. Paul's words to the Corinthians: "But the sensual man perceiveth not the

things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand."[1]

In the practice of this virtue, we ought to observe moderation as to the use of things, not only of those that are lawful, but also those which are necessary, such as sleep, food, recreation. Because all of these should be regulated according to the requirements of nature and of our state of life. It is as necessary for us to lead lives of temperance, as it is to regulate them by the exercise of prudence, justice, and fortitude. Let us examine ourselves how far we practise this virtue. Do we observe great moderation as regards the indulgence of our senses, especially of the eyes and palate? Do we give too much time to recreation, to useless and frivolous conversation? Do we control our natural inclinations and affections? Do we energetically repress feelings of anger and irritability, and avoid all undue use of the tongue in exaggerated expressions of praise or blame? If we find ourselves faulty in these respects, let us determine at once to correct ourselves, and let us beg God that He will give us the grace to keep our resolutions for the time to come.

16.—THE ORDINARY SOURCES OF DANGER.

How exalted and sublime is the office of the priest! How holy the calling by which he is brought into immediate communication with our Incarnate Lord! Daily he offers Him up in the Sacrifice of the Mass, daily he dispenses His Flesh and Blood to the faithful; for long hours He applies His cleansing Blood to wash away the deep stains from the souls of sinners, and constantly is adding new members to the Mystical Body of Christ. How holy then should be the priest, to whom the same

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Lord apportions abundant graces to enable him to fulfil worthily these his holy duties.

On the other hand, great also are the dangers which beset the priest. For, if the devil is especially hostile to all Christians, his hatred is far more deep and inveterate against those who are so closely allied to our Lord Himself, and whose profession it is to frustrate all the devil's plans for the ruin of souls. The world also, from several points of view, presents greater dangers for the priest than for others, with its false principles, pernicious maxims, and depraved examples; the priest in himself is but human, and bears about with him the weakness and waywardness of our fallen nature which, were it not for the signal graces attached to his divine vocation, would render him absolutely incapable of discharging his tremendous obligations. His life and actions are raised to the supernatural order in the care of souls, he must breathe a supernatural atmosphere, his work is spiritual, and yet at every step and at every turn he is confronted with the natural, and is liable to be affected by material influences. That we may remove these dangers as far as possible, and may protect ourselves against failure in our holy vocation, let us make the following considerations.

Amongst all the sources of danger, the greatest and most common is (1) *Neglect of spiritual duties*. When we were preparing for the priesthood, with what scrupulous care we performed all our religious actions, with what fidelity we applied ourselves to daily meditation and vocal prayer, with what fervour and devotion we visited the Blessed Sacrament and received Holy Communion: and with what care and reverence, with what recollection and lively faith did we offer up the Holy Sacrifice when we were admitted to the priesthood. We could say with all the fervour of holy David, "How lovely are Thy tabernacles: O Lord of hosts, my heart longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."[1] "I will go to the altar of God, to God who giveth joy to my youth."[2]

[1] Psalm lxxxiii. 2, 3. [2] Psalm xlii. 4.

As long as this disposition lasts all will go well; for to constancy and earnestness in our prayer are promised special graces from God, to enable us to discharge our obligations and perform our duties; but there still is danger lest from pressure of work, from fatigue, from real or often imaginary sickness, from the withdrawal of sensible consolation, from worry or harassing pre-occupation of mind, we begin to grow less faithful and fervent, occasionally omit or shorten the time of prayer, are less diligent in the necessary preparation for the celebration of Mass, or in giving full time to thanksgiving after it. Nor does the danger end here, for like a fast-growing ulcer, there is fear that this negligence may extend to the recitation of the Breviary and lead to its being performed in a hurried and distracted manner, and may affect the administration of all the sacraments of the Church, until many spiritual duties and offices are performed in a perfunctory, languid, indifferent manner, and many are left out altogether. The result will naturally be, withdrawal of grace, and then God help the poor priest! To avoid this the greatest danger, let us apply the maxim, *principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur*. In our examination for ordinary confession let us call ourselves to account as to the fixed hours of our prayers; whether we pray with attention, reverence, and devotion; whether we ever omit them, or shorten or change the time of them.

(2) The second danger to which we are exposed is *Indulgence of the senses*. Closely connected with the preceding, and not unfrequently its cause, is the liberty conceded to the senses. Under the mistaken idea that the priest should know all that is going on in his congregation, and also that he should be up to the times, there is a danger of his persuading himself that he must see everything, must read everything, must hear everything. The consequence of this will be not only an enormous loss of time, but serious dissipation of mind, giving rise to morbid curiosity, a dangerous play of the imagination, and endless occasions of sin. How many

have lost their innocence or even their faith by indulging their eyes or by imprudent reading. For a priest to indulge his senses in this manner is not only to expose himself to the proximate occasion of sin, but also to give great disedification, and to bring his sacred calling into disrepute.

(3) A third source of danger is *Love of self-ease*. Amongst the various benefits conferred upon the world by modern civilization, and the signs of progress during the second half of the nineteenth century, if we are to believe modern historians and political economists, is the increase of the comforts of life, and the general amelioration of the condition of all classes of society. Whilst the higher classes have means of gratification and are provided with luxuries which the preceding generations never dreamt of, the lower classes regard as necessities what fifty years ago were superfluities to the rich and select few. The consequence of this is a general tendency to self-indulgence and to creature comforts, the avoidance of labour, and of anything which demands sacrifice or interferes with self-ease; in a word, it is to put the body above the soul and materialize life. Hence the importance attached to eating and drinking, to clothing, to sleeping, to luxuries in furniture, &c., all of which administer to bodily comfort.

This general tendency is invading the sanctuary, not without grave danger to the priesthood unless vigorously resisted. It shows itself in the lavish furniture of the sitting-room and provision of the toilet, in the generous expenditure on table and cellar, in the quantity and quality of clothes and shoes, in the care expended on this body of death which we carry about with us. Neatness and cleanliness are admirable and edifying in those advanced in years, but in the young priest *extra* neatness may be more easily dispensed with, and no danger of disedification be incurred. Let us examine ourselves on this point, and see how far we carry out the imitation of Jesus Christ with regard to poverty in the details of our daily life. As a rule, the more simple and self-denying

our manner of life, and the less account we make of bodily comforts and conveniences, the greater will be our influence for good, and the more highly shall we be respected. Elegance is not to be desired in a priest.

(4) A fourth danger is *Effusiveness on outward things*. When we consider the position of the Catholic priest in the present state of religion, the small number of priests, and the multitude of the duties which he is called upon to fulfil, this presents a great danger. He has to preach very frequently, he has to undertake the management of confraternities or guilds both spiritually and financially, to visit the sick in hospitals and prisons, as well as those scattered through a large parish, to manage his schools, to visit and take the census of his parishioners, to go about and collect means of providing for the expenses or support of his mission, often indeed for paying off debts, to organize concerts, or bazaars for the same objects of charity or religion, to patronize clubs or the public games of his parishioners, &c.,—what wonder then is it that he is often tempted to throw himself into all these active works, and thereby expose himself to neglect what is of infinitely greater importance, the interior life and the progress of his own soul? What wonder that his spiritual duties are abbreviated or omitted, that his Office is hurried over with but slight attention or devotion, his Mass is said with little recollection, but many distractions? What wonder that he finds small consolation in things spiritual, and consequently seeks satisfaction in those external occupations which withdraw him from union with God, and drag his life down to a mere natural level? Then follows abuse of grace, gradual alienation from God, and finally a worldly and dissipated spirit which ordinarily ends very sadly. Oh! let us remember our first duty is to God in the sanctification of our own souls, and next to this the sanctification of the souls of as many others as possible; that all other things, no matter how important they may be, should occupy only a secondary and infinitely inferior place. We shall not be

asked by our Supreme Judge who may at any time call upon us to give an account of our stewardship, whether our missionary life was a financial success, but whether we ourselves loved and served Him, and promoted His knowledge, love, and service in the souls entrusted to our care.

Another source of danger is a habit of *Carping criticism*. There are some so blind to the defects of others, or of so yielding and easy a disposition, that they fall short of their duty by ignoring or excusing their faults, thus neglecting the counsel of St. Paul, to "reprove, entreat, rebuke, in all patience and doctrine;"[1] and thereby they incur serious responsibility before God. Others of a very different temperament are so keen-sighted as to see faults or defects, which exist simply in their own imagination, or which they grossly exaggerate. Nor do they make this mistake only as regards their parishioners, they unfortunately manifest the same spirit towards their brethren or even Superiors. They allow nothing that is said or done to pass, but must give their judgment upon it, and too commonly the sentence pronounced is unfavourable. So distorted is sometimes their mental vision, and so perverted their judgment, that they invariably attach an unfavourable interpretation to whatever comes under their notice. In fact they find it hard to approve of anything which they themselves have not initiated, or on which they have not been consulted. The preaching or direction of others is condemned, their manner of dealing with their congregations, the management of their parish or of their schools is censured, their conduct is canvassed; and not unfrequently the orders and regulations of Superiors and even of Bishops are passed in review and are strongly reprobated. Such persons lose the confidence of their colleagues, and are kept at arm's length; they are looked upon as disaffected and dangerous, and at length are left severely alone. The result too often is that becoming friendless, they are obliged to consume their own spleen without any one to sympathize

[1] 2 Timothy iv. 2.

with them, and are forced to have recourse to the laity, who think no better of them for their disloyalty towards their ecclesiastical brethren, and not unfrequently the evil grows till it ends in the issue of demissorial letters, and the beginning of a rapid downward course.

Let us above all things be loyal to one another. Surrounded as we are by enemies, let us stand together, let us encourage each other, let us defend and uphold each other; and if we cannot praise others, at least let us never forget ourselves so far as to say a word against them to the laity, or tolerate from the laity any disparaging language in respect of them. We may rest assured that our loyalty will be appreciated by them, and that their confidence in us will be secured and increased, whereas any disloyalty on our part would turn to our own humiliation and discredit, and recall to the minds of our hearers the example of Judas, who was a traitor to his Divine Master as well as to his colleagues in the Apostolate.

Finally, another source of danger arises from too much *Visiting*. To visit those whose souls are entrusted to us by God, that we may draw them to know, love, and serve Him here, and thus attain everlasting happiness hereafter, is a duty strictly incumbent on us. We must know our sheep, and our sheep must know us; we must along with Jesus go about doing good, comforting the sorrowful, encouraging the faint-hearted, counselling those who are in trouble, stimulating the negligent, confirming the good. Such visits draw down graces upon ourselves, besides being a source of blessings to others; but let us beware of mere idle visits, utterly uncalled for, wherein time is wasted, and unprofitable conversation is indulged in, where over-familiarity is allowed, until it generally breeds contempt or even worse. To visit the poor and sick and miserable is well; but we should leave to others calls upon the well-to-do or such pious people as do not need our help, remembering that we are "not sent except for the lost sheep of Israel." Let us be uncom-

promising on this point of visiting: for in some respects it is a most dangerous and prolific source of ruin.

If we find ourselves drawn into any one of these sources of danger, let us thank God for revealing it to us, humbly beg pardon for the faults we have committed, and firmly resolve to guard against them for the future.

End with the "Our Father."

APPENDIX III.

CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MAY FURNISH MATTER FOR ELECTION AND REFORMATION OF LIFE, AND ARE USEFUL FOR RELIGIOUS.

1.—ON ESTEEM FOR OUR VOCATION.

A religious vocation is a grace, or rather a series of graces, by which we are called to a special service of our King and Lord. From this it follows that it is a state of life highly honourable and happy, in which we enjoy a real and true liberty, and are protected from the cares, anxieties, and miseries of the world. It is a state most pleasing to God, most profitable to the Religious himself, and beneficial also to society. These points will now furnish matter for our reflection.

First Point.—A religious vocation is pleasing to God, both as regards its end, and the means employed for its attainment. The end of man is to serve God in this life and so to secure eternal salvation. Such an end can be attained more *quickly*, more *surely*, and more *perfectly* in Religion, where besides the observance of the Commandments, we profess to follow the Evangelical Counsels, and to observe a code of rules by which regular discipline is maintained. If he who observes the Commandments of God proves thereby that he loves God,[1]

[1] St. John xiv. 21—24.

and if for the same reason, Christ abides in him and he in Christ,[1] thus rendering him well pleasing to his Heavenly Father, how much more pleasing must the Religious be who in addition, that he may become more conformed to our Blessed Lord and more intimately united with Him, cuts himself off from all things else, crucifies himself to the world, and resigns his own will and judgment to the will and judgment of God, as manifested to him by his Superior. Now this is done by all Religious, who thus remove as far as possible every impediment to the attaining of our end, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.[2]

Besides these means by which attainment of our end is made more secure, and which are common to all Religious, special rules exist peculiar to each Religious Order, as so many applications of the Gospel prescribed by the holy men who under God have founded each, framed by them under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and approved and confirmed by the Church.

Second Point.—It is a state advantageous to the Religious himself. This is clear, whether we regard it from a supernatural or natural point of view. For as to the former, he is aided in the service of God by the vigilance and care of Superiors, and by the example of his equals; by the regulations of the time and manner in which each of his duties of piety, charity, and self-conquest have to be performed, and which are to him the clear expression of God's will in his regard. How different is the state of persons living in the world, who have often the greatest difficulty to discover, and are often left in doubt, as to what may be most pleasing to God!

Again, these latter are frequently crippled and harassed by the demands made upon them through the requirements of their state, by the cares and anxieties of their family or friends, by the laws and regulations of society, or the exactions of public opinion, and in this way their liberty is curtailed, and their freedom of action

[1] 1 St. John iii. 24. [2] 1 St. John ii. 10.

destroyed. Not so with Religious. They acknowledge but one Master, whom alone they obey without the hindrance of natural ties, for from these by their engagement with God they have broken themselves loose, and thus enjoy the most perfect freedom, that, namely, of the children of God, to serve whom is to reign, and whose yoke is sweet, whose burden is light.[1]

The profitableness of the religious life, even in a material point of view, is also made clear to those who are called. They are freed from the cares and responsibilities of the world, from all anxieties as to food, clothing, and lodging, from the tyranny of fashion and of public opinion, from the malice and machinations of enemies, from the flattery and insincerity of false friends, and from the countless miseries which arise from jealousy. They dwell in a peaceful harbour, into which the agitating storms of the world do not enter, and where the bright light of God's countenance is always shining.

Third Point.—The existence of the religious state amongst them is beneficial also to society. Those who are called to the active life in Religion benefit society, some by teaching children, by bringing them up and instructing them in the knowledge and love of God, and by conducting them along the way of true peace and liberty to eternal life. Others do this by nursing the aged and sick poor; others by visiting those in affliction and administering relief and consolation; others by sheltering orphans or reclaiming such as have gone astray. In a word, not one can be found of the many miseries to which society is exposed but our Heavenly Father has provided for it by the ministry of Religious.

As regards those who are called to follow the example of Mary by embracing a life of contemplation, they too are a benefit to society. By their prayers they draw down the blessing and protection of God on their friends and country and ward off calamities which would otherwise overwhelm them, or diminish the disasters which have befallen them. Again, contemplative Religious

[1] St. Matt. xi. 30.

spend their lives in offering up severe penances and prayers in satisfaction for the crimes and sins of their fellow-countrymen or others. They sacrifice their worldly freedom and voluntarily embrace a life-long confinement in the bonds of charity in order to win for others the spiritual liberty of the children of God. All this should convince us of the very great value attaching to the religious state. Considered in itself it is an exalted, glorious, heroic, and supernatural form of life. In its effects on others it is most useful, both in the natural and supernatural orders, not only to individuals, but also to society in general. As regards those who are called to it, it represses all that is bad or less good in them, and develops in them all the finest qualities of their nature and purifies them so as to make them models and objects of admiration and encouragement to their fellow-men. Hence we are bound to acknowledge that we ought to love and cherish the vocation which God has given to us, hold it in the highest esteem, embrace it with the utmost fervour, observe and treasure our holy Rule; and, in short, spare no pains to acquire its spirit and perfect ourselves in its practice.

Let us then examine ourselves carefully and see whether we do really hold our vocation in due esteem, with what care we observe our Rules, whether we employ the means of acquiring the true spirit of our Order and of constantly keeping it alive in ourselves, and whether by word and example we try to promote it in our brethren. Finally, let us determine what needs correction in this respect, and let us beg of God and our Lady to help us in carrying it out.

End with the "Our Father."

2.—ON ESTEEM FOR OUR RULES.

Next to esteem of our vocation to Religion, and necessarily connected with it, is the appreciation of our Rule ; in fact the test and measure of the one is the practical observance of the other. Hence a Religious who cares little for his Rules, and thinks nothing of breaking those which are not binding under sin, shows little regard for his vocation, is too often a source of disedification or scandal to his brethren, and sometimes ends in abandoning religious life altogether. To protect ourselves against this danger, let us consider the necessity and importance of our Rule, its sacred character, and the spirit with which we should observe it.

First Point.—The necessity of the Rule.—In every body of men who combine in working for the attainment of one common end, and whose mutual co-operation is indispensable for securing it, it is requisite that they should bind themselves by certain rules to a common action. It is the same with those who join together for the promotion of God's glory in the religious state. The action of God Himself in the formation of various Religious Orders makes this clear, as also does the approbation and confirmation of such rules by the Vicar of Christ, the piety of those whom the Spirit of God has selected to found them, and again, the dictates of right reason itself.

Moreover, as in an army, all are not called upon to perform the same duties, but are differently equipped and are differently trained for their respective duties, and as in a human act the various powers of the soul, together with the senses and members of the body, have each their respective functions to perform, by which they execute it ; so in the promotion of God's glory and the sanctification of souls, the various Religious Orders have each a determinate part to perform, and this is definitely laid down

in the Rule.[1] From this consideration we see also, how important it is that we should comprehend fully the nature and spirit of the Order to which we belong, and not confound it with that of other Religious Congregations from which it is distinguished, and whose rules consequently differ from ours. Unless this is done, a door is opened to abuses and innovations, which would tend to destroy unity and charity, and would imperil the very existence of any Order, or at least expose it to the sad necessity of having to be reformed. Let us pray that God will enlighten us to see how necessary and important it is that we should appreciate our holy Rule, should love it and reduce it to practice.

Second Point.—The Sacredness of our Rule.—This is clear from the approbation which it has received, from the sanctity which it inculcates, and the holiness of those who practise it.

That the Vicar of Christ should approve it is sufficient testimony of its holiness, and suffices to stamp it as holy with all those who are members of the Church and are animated with the spirit of faith. That it is holy in itself and in what it inculcates, is equally clear. For as regards those parts which concern the three vows, and which constitute the substance and essence of religious life, our Blessed Lord, the source of all true sanctity, has consecrated them by word and by example. He was poor in spirit and in effect;[2] from the manger to the sepulchre His poverty never abandoned Him; moreover, He loved and blessed the poor. As to chastity, He loved it with so jealous and watchful a love, that He willed to be born of a Virgin, to be Himself the King of virgins, the source and model of all purity in body and in mind. Thirdly, the history of His Life is summed up in one word, "He was obedient to Mary and Joseph, to His Heavenly Father, and even to His cruel executioners."

That it is a holy thing to imitate our Blessed Lord is self-evident, and the greater and more perfect this imitation, so much the greater will be our perfection.

[1] Comp. Psalm xliv. 14. [2] 2 Cor. viii. 9.

How wide and deep then must that holiness be which is involved in the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as inculcated by the Rule!

Again, in our Rule other solid virtues are insisted upon, such as *humility*, which is to be acquired by the humiliations that the Rule prescribes, and which are practised by all fervent Religious. Among these are *mortification*, at least of the interior, and in the restraint placed upon the eyes and tongue, for the repression of curiosity, of dissipation, and of a host of other faults; *recollection* and union with God in prayer; and *charity* in its highest perfection. Besides these, other rules come in that pertain more immediately to the special end put by its Founder before the members of his Society, and all of them are holy.

Lastly, the holiness of the Rule is evidenced in the lives of the various members who observe it. Not that all those who are in Religion have attained the height of sanctity. There are plenty of good Religious, but would that more of them were saints! This is not, however, the fault of the Rule, but of those who owing to negligence, indifference, or self-indulgence, fail to observe it. But in all the Religious Orders whose birth dates three hundred years back, there are many whom Holy Church proposes to us as objects of admiration and imitation, and whose names she has inserted in the calendar of her saints.

With how great reverence then should we not regard our Rule, what scrupulous care should we bring to its observance, not only in great things, but also in the smallest, seeing that in God's service nothing in reality is small.

Third Point.—In what spirit are we to observe our Rule. —Some Religious are great sticklers for the letter of the law, but fail to grasp its spirit, and *vice versâ*. Such persons are a source of danger and trouble in Religion, and more than fail to give edification or to promote charity. There is in all Orders an authorized and traditional interpretation which ought to be our guide

as to observance; it should be complete, prompt, uncompromising, and cheerful. *Complete*, that is, entire, and not by halves, or done in a slovenly and perfunctory manner; *prompt*, not unreasonably deferred and put off to another time through a dilatory spirit so common in our day; *uncompromising*, throwing our whole soul into what we have to do, and doing it as perfectly as by God's grace we can; lastly, *cheerful*, for God loves a cheerful giver;[1] by this means we shall give edification and encouragement to others, and be to them a living proof in ourselves that His yoke is gentle, His burden light,[2] and that His spirit is sweet.[3]

Fourth Point.—Let us examine ourselves and see in what way we show our respect and esteem for our Rule. The best test of this is observance of it. Do we, for example, leave ourselves entirely in the hands of Superiors, that they may use us where, when, as much, and as long as they like, without murmuring or complaining? Do we plead excuses of health, incapacity, or unfitness, for difficulty in obeying their orders and appointments, and thereby force them to place our burdens on the shoulders of others, an action on our part which is as mean and unworthy of a Religious as it is cowardly? Do we shun all singularity in food, clothing, and outward comportment, or, on the contrary, seek for extras or claim exemptions on the plea of health; favours which conduce much to laxity in regular religious observance, and consequently are not to be lightly permitted?

Let us remember that we rarely violate our Rules without displeasing God, injuring ourselves, and disedifying our religious brethren. Let us bewail our frequent faults, and make practical resolutions for the time to come.

[1] 2 Cor. ix. 7. [2] St. Matt. xi. 30. [3] Wisdom xi. 1.

3.—ON THE VOW OF POVERTY.

First Point.—A Religious, by his vow of poverty, resigns all proprietorship, and consequently cannot possess anything as his own or dispose of anything independently without leave of his Superior. He may have the *use* of those things which are sanctioned by his Rule, but even then he must be prepared to relinquish them at the reasonable command of the Superior; nor can he, even with the Superior's permission, make use of superfluities without detriment to his vow.

How necessary it is that this virtue should be maintained in its integrity is evident from the importance attached to it by our Blessed Lord, from the estimation in which it was held by all the founders of Religious Orders, from the strict views taken of it by moral theologians, and from the sad effects which have resulted in those Religious Orders wherein its observance has been relaxed.

The obligation contracted by this vow is two-fold. First, it obliges a Religious not to possess, take, or receive any temporal gift in order to keep, use, or dispose of it without leave of his Superior; and secondly, not to accept of anything, even from externs or friends, and not to keep or dispose of it without the permission of Superiors. This is recognized by all theologians and canonists, and is adopted by all the masters of spiritual life.[1]

Nor is it enough to renounce exteriorly all proprietorship whilst interiorly we cherish a love of those things which we have abandoned, for such poverty would be hypocritical; nor, again, can it be said that we are really poor, even though in deed and interiorly we have quitted all things, if in Religion we are careful to have all we want, such as good food, good clothes, and good lodgings, nay, murmur and are troubled when we do not get what we wish; seeing that in this we seek to be rich rather

[1] Comp. St. Augustine, *De com. vita;* St. Bernard, *Ad Monach.*

than poor, and manifest the desire for a life of ease and plenty. If we are truly poor Religious, we must be content to lack even what is deemed necessary, for the truly poor man despises even necessary things.

Second Point.—The excellence of the vow.—1. It is the foundation of evangelical perfection.[1] Our Lord, moreover, began His Sermon on the Mount by blessing holy poverty; His whole life was a declaration of the same truth. St. Jerome and St. Gregory assert the same.[2] St. Ignatius,[3] likewise, says "that poverty is to be looked upon as the wall and fortress of Religion, and is to be preserved in all its purity as far as God's grace will enable us."

2. We learn its excellence too from the rewards which God attaches to it. For our Lord declares that it shall be rewarded by an infinite treasure in Heaven and the possession of an eternal Kingdom. They too who have abandoned all for His sake shall on the Day of Judgment exercise the office of judges and not of criminals.[4]

3. But even in this life the vow of poverty is rewarded a hundred-fold,[5] a blessing which refers not only to spiritual goods, but extends also to external things. For we have everything, nay, often more than we need, and have not to ask whether it be dear or cheap; we have peace of mind, freedom from anxiety and care, consideration and respect, such as we should never have met with otherwise, absence from toil, and abundance of leisure to increase in virtue and perfection. It causes the soul to despise all earthly things and enables it to direct all its thoughts to Heaven—to soar more easily towards God and unite itself more closely to Him.

4. Lastly, it fosters and protects the two other vows, removes many dangers which are opposed to them, and is the surest safeguard against laxity and the need of reform.

Third Point.—From the many advantages and excel-

[1] Comp. St. Matt. xix. 21. [2] Hom. xxxii. [3] Reg. *Sum.* 3.
[4] St. Matt. xix. 27. Comp. St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquin.
[5] St. Matt. xix. 29.

lences of poverty it follows that we should cherish a great esteem and love for it. As a child loves its mother, clings to her and flies to her for protection, so should every Religious treat holy poverty; should love it as a mother[1] and regard it as the bulwark and fortress of religious life against the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil. If this love is sincere, we shall desire to experience its effects and shall accept them with joy. We shall be sparing in the use even of those things which are deemed necessary, and quit ourselves of them as much as we can, whether in food, clothing, lodging, or everything else. We shall fly from all unnecessary exemptions and indulgences under the pretexts of health, &c., and conform to the common life, thereby cutting off all causes of disedification and occasions of uncharitableness. Let us seriously examine ourselves on these points, and at once correct anything in which we are wanting.

4.—ON THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE.

How dear to the Sacred Heart the virtue of obedience is our Blessed Lord Himself teaches us by the example which He left us in His own mortal Life. He was obedient to Mary and Joseph, to Pilate, and even to His very executioners; but this obedience was subordinated to the will of His Heavenly Father. His will was to do always what was most pleasing to Him; nay, it was His meat and drink—so to say, He lived upon it. In imitation of Him the saints have loved and cultivated this virtue, and many at the call of God have bound themselves by vow to observe it. For Religious it is made one of the substantials of their calling. We will then consider its nature and object, the motives of it, and the means to be employed in order to practise and perfect ourselves in it.

[1] P. vi. *Const. S.J.*

First Point.—By the vow of obedience we bind ourselves to submit our own will and judgment to our Superior, as ruling in the name of God, or in some religious bodies as the custodian and interpreter of the Rule. This obedience extends not only to our actions and use of exterior things, but must embrace also our judgment and will, which we conform to the judgment and will of the Superior, who occupies the place of Christ; nor may it hesitate when the things enjoined are difficult or repugnant, or if the Superior be wanting in prudence or other qualities, seeing that he holds the place of Christ, who cannot be mistaken, and who in His providence will make good what is wanting in His representative.[1] We see how perfect the sacrifice is which we offer to God by this vow from the fact that we retain nothing for or of ourselves, but consecrate even the noblest part of ourselves to God our Lord, namely, our judgment and will, so as to will only what He wills, and judge all things according as He judges them, and as He is pleased to make this known to us through the Superior whom He has placed over us. Now all this must be done *thoroughly*, *promptly*, *heartily*, and in the truest humility, without any excuse or murmuring, and in a spirit of reverence and love.

Second Point.—The motives which should prompt us to excel in obedience are: 1. That thereby we imitate most perfectly our Blessed Lord, for we make an offering of our whole selves to God, whose will and judgment we substitute in place of our own.

2. By this we avoid all error of will or judgment, inasmuch as we conform them to those of the Superior, who stands to us in the place of God, and who has to answer to God for us.

3. We thus promote concord and charity, inasmuch as our wills and judgments are in harmony with those of God manifested to us in our Superior.

4. Obedience is necessary not only for the good government of the Order, but also for its efficiency and

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 3; Ephes. vi. 5.

even for its very existence, as reason shows. It is quite possible that, from imprudence, or the influence of some less well-ordered passion, or from simple misunderstanding, the Superior may err in the command he gives, but even then we shall not lose by our obedience, because the providence of God will not permit this, and will only direct the occasion to our greater sanctification if we obey in a spirit of faith and love, as though it was Christ Himself who had enjoined what is commanded.

Third Point.—In order that we may acquire facility in the exercise of this virtue, and that we may attain some degree of perfection therein, we must cultivate a life of faith, and thus accustom ourselves to look upon the Superior not merely as a man subject to faults like ourselves, but as the representative and mouthpiece of God, and must with great simplicity accept his orders as the expression of the Divine will, even though we may be blamed or penanced for faults of which we have not been guilty.

We must also be practically indifferent respecting the country, the place, and the office which obedience may assign to us, looking upon the order as the expression of the Divine will, and obeying it in a spirit of holy confidence, and by faith embracing it as coming from the hands of God. Another useful practice is to renew our vows frequently, more particularly after Mass or immediately after Holy Communion, with all the fervour we can command. Finally, we should make frequent acts of humility and self-abasement, thanking God for having called us to serve Him and to glorify Him in Religion by a life of dependence.

Let us examine ourselves and see if the motive of our obedience is always supernatural, by which alone it is rendered more and more easy the longer and more advanced we have grown in the religious life, and without which it becomes more difficult, and our vocation in great danger of being lost. Do we condemn Superiors and their mode of government? Do we ourselves complain or listen to the complaints of others? Let us remember

that we live in times and in a country which expose us to special danger, in which independence is held as honourable, and liberty of speech is greatly esteemed and praised. If we are conscious of faults in these respects, let us resolve to amend.

5.—EXCELLENCE OF THE SOCIETY AS A SACRIFICE.

The essential element of religion and its highest expression is sacrifice: and consequently when there is not an actual sacrifice there is no real religion. Whence it follows that the more sacred, solemn, and excellent the sacrifice, the more sacred, holy, and exalted will be the religion.

Prelude 1.—Attend to the words which our Lord addresses to us: *Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium gens sancta.*

Prelude 2.—Beg, &c.

First Point.—The dignity of a sacrifice is estimated by the nature of the victim, by the exalted character and sanctity of the priest, and by the perfection with which the sacrificial act symbolizes the intention for which sacrifice is offered up, and expresses our acknowledgment of the supreme sovereignty of God.

Now applying these points to the Mass itself we are led to see its stupendous dignity and infinite holiness.

Second Point.—These words may be applied also to *Religious:* (1) *Genus electum, elegi vos.*[1] Taken from amidst worldlings, specially favoured, blessed, &c. (2) *Regale sacerdotium.* Every priest offers a sacrifice in which the victim is of inestimable value[2]—of more value than all material things—he is allied by adoption with the Divine nature,[3] *hæredes Dei.*[4] As priest he is a child of God,

[1] St. John xv. 19. Also Ephes. ii. 4, and St. John xv. 16.
[2] *Empti,* &c. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) [3] *Consors,* &c. (2 St. Peter i. 4.)
[4] Romans viii. 17.

brother of the Great High Priest, and especially chosen as Aaron was—and he offers himself as a sacrifice in loving acknowledgment, &c. But there are degrees in the extent to which the victim is offered. In all Religious Orders personal proprietorship, personal will and judgment, are sacrificed according to their respective Institutes; all sensual gratification inconsistent with purity; and also all liberty as defined by the rules; and according to the degree of these sacrifices we estimate the excellence and perfection of the Order.

Third Point.—How then do we stand in this respect? *Genus electum!* In estimation of Church—of its *Popes*, of its *enemies*. *Quæ regio . . . non tincta a nobis cruore. . . . Quæ regio nostro non plena labore?* China, Japan, Indies, North and South America, England, Germany, Africa. *Electum*—marked out for admiration or persecution, praise or calumny, honour or death, &c. In ourselves, we may be surpassed by others, in love of God, humility, penance, &c., but as far as the sacrifice of the victim is concerned, it cannot be greater or more complete. As regards our *bodies* we must be dead to place, office, food, clothing, lodging; nay, must be content to beg from door to door—in a word, to keep the 12th Rule. As to our *hearts* we must substitute love of Jesus Christ for all other objects of our love, such as country, friends, relatives.[1] We must regard *poverty* as our *mother* and our bulwark. Obedience, as though we were sticks or dead bodies; must love and seek humiliations, contempt, and persecution.[2] We must root out self-love under its countless forms. And in what spirit is all this to be done? Not in a narrow one, but generously and according to the spirit of the one Great High Priest.

[1] See 8th Rule. [2] See 11th Rule.

6.—ON RELIGIOUS CHARITY.

If charity is necessary in all who profess to follow our Lord, and if it is impossible to love Him unless we also love our neighbour, how much more necessary is it for those who are called to a particularly close union with Him and to a far more perfect imitation of Him than others, through their vocation to the religious life? Holy David exclaims: "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity,"[1] and we may add, and how evil and how sad it is when these very persons are living at discord with one another. When charity prevails in a community, the convent is the vestibule of Heaven, and life therein is a foretaste of the happiness of our eternal home; but if charity be banished from it, then life there has become worse than Purgatory. Hence as Religious we are bound to cultivate this virtue very carefully, and to strive both to attain its perfection in ourselves and to promote it in others. It will help us to do this if we devote the present consideration to the three points of its necessity, its exercise, and the greatness of the blessings attached to it.

First Point.—As to its necessity, our Blessed Lord has insisted on this repeatedly in the strongest terms. We must love our neighbour as we love ourselves—nay, even as Christ Himself has loved us: for it is by this characteristic that we are to be recognized as His disciples, and unless we love the brotherhood the charity of God is not in us. Again, it is written, "The soul that has not charity dwells in the regions of death." This charity is not to be confined to mere external observance, nor may our obligation to practise it be satisfied by avoiding to give offence. We must be filled with a truly cordial love and most sincere desire for the good of others, we must speak with kindness and with

[1] Psalm cxxxii. 1.

respect of others, while in our conduct we must show deference and consideration towards them at the sacrifice of our own convenience, and must anticipate their wishes and provide for their comforts. And all this charity is to be shown not only to those who are our friends, but to strangers, nay, even, says our Lord, to our enemies and those who calumniate and persecute us.[1] Such is the law imposed upon all Christians by Jesus Christ, and on its fulfilment will depend the salvation and degree of glory with which it is to be rewarded.[2]

Second Point.—The motives urging us to aim at the perfection of charity are many and weighty. They are (1) The manner in which our Lord has impressed this duty upon His disciples. (2) He has made our neighbour to be the substitute of Himself as an object of our love, and has transferred to them His claims upon us. (3) They are the members of His own Body, and like ourselves are vessels consecrated to His service and destined to share with us in an eternal Kingdom. But between Religious still more powerful motives exist. (4) Our brethren have left the world and have abandoned family and friends and all things else to give themselves entirely to the praise and service of God, and to the love of Him who is the Spouse of our souls also; therefore have they a very special claim upon our love and gratitude. (5) By their profession they have become objects of the attack and malice of our enemy the devil, the enemy of our human nature, and of the world. Against them we both are enlisted to fight, and if we would secure the victory, we equally with them stand in need of a strong and close union together in the bonds of charity. (6) We are pledged to each other for the attainment of one and the same great end, that can be attained only through one common means, namely, the keeping of our Rule, and the exercise of the like virtues, the same principles and conduct of life. Whence it follows that not only should the exercise of charity be more easy to us, but it is also the more necessary.

[1] St. Luke vi. 28. [2] St. Matt. xxv. 34, 35.

Third Point.—God rewards and blesses fraternal charity.

First, He promises forgiveness to those who practise this virtue, and pledges Himself to deal with us as we deal with our neighbour. "But before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves, for charity covereth a multitude of sins."[1] And again: "For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what you mete, it shall be measured to you again."[2] He further declares that unless we have charity, even though we speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have faith enough to move mountains, and distribute our goods to the poor through a philanthropic disposition, they will avail us nothing without charity.[3] On the other hand, "charity edifieth,"[4] for by his meekness, patience, unselfishness, and humility, the Religious gives edification and good example to all his brethren, and diffuses, as it were, a pleasant perfume through the whole community, and attracts others to follow in his footsteps.[5] Where charity flourishes, there will true joy and interior peace also manifest themselves exteriorly.[6] Lastly, it secures religious fervour, cheerfulness in God's service, and rapid progress towards perfection.

Let us then examine ourselves seriously on our dispositions and conduct in regard of this virtue. Do we treat our religious brethren with great reverence, patience, and forbearance? Do we blind our eyes to their faults and shortcomings, and observe only the good that is in them? Do we anticipate them by kindly offices? Do we repress all inordinate affections and aversions, and eschew all particular attachments, the real enemy of fraternal charity? Do we guard against the danger to which we are exposed by our national bluntness and insular character? In our dealings with those of other nations, are we intolerant of their manners and habits, or always ready to make due allowance for them? Do we show a spirit of kindness and hospitality

[1] 1 St. Peter iv. 8. [2] St. Matt. vii. 2. [3] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.
[4] 1 Cor. viii. 1. [5] Cant. i. 3. [6] Galat. v. 13, 22.

to visitors? Towards the sick do we show great patience, and attend upon them with tenderness, thoughtfulness, and care?

As we may sin more easily and grievously in the matter of charity, it is well to examine ourselves most thoroughly, and to see in what we need to correct our conduct with regard to it. Let us never forget the golden rule, "Do to others as you would wish them to do to you."

7.—ON TEPIDITY IN RELIGION.

There is no vice against which the masters of spiritual life inveigh more earnestly than against this, styling it "the abridgment of evil," "the mother of hardness of heart," "the sepulchre of the soul," "a slow poison," &c. Tepidity makes religious life unbearable, turning all its duties into so many labours and heavy burthens, and robbing the soul of all cheerfulness, hopefulness, and consolation. It causes a loathing and nausea of prayer and spiritual things, a repugnance to recollection and mortification, and an inclination to seek relief in dissipation and in the pleasures of sense, in idleness also, and useless conversation. It is, however, to be carefully distinguished from the state of a soul which, for its sanctification and for the promotion of God's glory, is allowed by Him to suffer from what St. Ignatius describes as aridity and desolation of spirit, and which arises from no fault of its own, but from the malice of the devil, either directly or indirectly.

Let us take this subject as being more especially useful for our consideration.

First Point.—The origin of tepidity is generally to be ascribed to a want of appreciation of our spiritual duties, especially meditation and examination of conscience, and consequent negligence and indifference in performing

them, to neglecting of the counsel given by our Lord, *Vigilate et orate*—"Watch and pray," hence the soul grows drowsy and inactive, and lays itself open to temptation. Or again, it frequently arises from natural activity and undue effusiveness on outward things, or from a spirit of laziness and a disposition to lose one's time in idle and unprofitable conversation. It often also arises from the indulgence of a morbid curiosity to see and hear everything that passes, to learn all the news, and then to go about imparting it to others, by which means silence is violated, and the spirit of recollection is wounded or destroyed.

Second Point.—Among the many signs of tepidity we may mention—that our prayers and meditation are rarely made, or only by fits and starts, and even then in a wearied, heartless, and slovenly manner; our general and particular examinations of conscience are neglected or slurred over in a perfunctory manner; and our duties are performed out of habit or routine, and are prompted by merely natural motives.

Violations of rules are held as not binding under sin, and even deliberate venial sins are frequently committed, causing little or no qualms of conscience. The company of those whose observance is fervent and exemplary, is shunned, while the counsels and advice of the spiritual director are unattended to or ignored.

Such are the chief signs of tepidity, by which we may safely test how far we have cause to fear lest we ourselves may be in that state.

Third Point.—What are the means to be adopted to correct tepidity in us?

1. We must seek out the hidden roots of it in our souls. Generally speaking these will be an inordinate affection to earthly things in the shape of ease, pleasure, honour, or health; or else a dread of labour, pain, and humiliations. Let us determine at all cost to eradicate these.

2. To acquire the grace necessary for doing this we must at once renew our fervour in fidelity in prayer and

meditation, and our exactness in the use of the particular examination.

3. To dwell often upon the great truths and upon the Passion and Death of our Blessed Lord.[1]

4. To practise silence and fly from all distracting occupations.

Let us examine how we stand with regard to tepidity in every respect, and beg God to preserve us from falling into it.

End with the "Our Father."

8.—ON COMMON LIFE.

St. John Berchmans was wont to assert, *Vita communis mea maxima mortificatio*—"Common life is my greatest and constant mortification;" and certainly there is very much to justify the saying; for the strict observance of common life calls for watchful violence done to self in almost every action of the day, and involves the exercise of humility, mortification, charity, and other virtues, quite necessary for all those who live in religious community. Common life is doubly necessary where the members are gathered from various countries, differing in temperament, customs, manners, and modes of life, and where the respective talents and tastes of various classes of men are often much opposed. If regularity is not to give place to disorder, if uniformity and union are to be preserved, it is easy to see that common life must be faithfully carried out, and that consequently whosoever is incapable of observing it from one cause or another, unless this be of a temporary character, is unfitted for conventual or monastic life. In order then to impress upon ourselves the importance and necessity of this practice, as also to increase in ourselves a practical love of it, let us consider the following points.

[1] St. Augustine, in Psalm cvi.; St. Gregory, in Job.

1. Lay persons who are seriously striving to serve God, will be frequently compelled to deliberate and ask themselves what God's service or glory requires of them, and will feel obliged often to act in doubt as to what may be the Divine will, whereas the person consecrated to God in religious life is subject to no such uncertainty, having his rule of life in all its details clearly drawn out for him. The rules and customs of his Institute, the commands of Superiors, and the approved traditions of his Order trace out the line of conduct which he ought to follow in every circumstance of his daily life. When then a person seeks admission into any Religious Order, he implicitly at least pledges himself to observe its rules, customs, and traditions, and in honour, truth, and justice he is bound to be faithful to his engagements. A primary mark of the religious life is that uniformity is to be observed in all things, and hence in most Religious Orders this is insisted upon to such an extent as to appear even ridiculous to persons in the world, and a perpetual source of annoyance to them; nor do we find any exceptions to the regular observance of the letter or spirit of the Rule allowed even to those who have grown old and enfeebled in Religion. Were it otherwise, such an Institute would be regarded with grave mistrust, as opening the door to relaxation of discipline, and as militating against the idea of community life.

2. By "common life" order and regularity are secured. When all rise at the same time, perform their religious exercises at the same hours, partake of similar food, meet together in the same recreations, and retire to rest at a fixed signal, then all goes on smoothly and in due order. "By Thy ordinance the day goeth on."[1] As a machine, whose several parts are fitted together and work in harmony, fulfils the end for which it was designed efficiently and with perfect satisfaction, so does a community, each of whose members observes the rules and customs, attain its end efficiently to the edification of all. On the other hand, where common life is not observed,

[1] Psalm cxviii. 91.

where exemptions are permitted, or extras are allowed, the whole community is, so to speak, thrown out of gear, irregularity is introduced; in fact, such a community may be compared to a machine in which one or more of the wheels fails to move, or moves eccentrically, and thus causes confusion, noise, or total disarrangement, so that the end for which it was made is either imperfectly attained or not attained at all.

3. By the observance of "common life," fervour is also secured. Where we find a community in which the members are all animated by a spirit of recollection, and all cultivate habitual union with God, there also shall we find religious fervour; there too, as a necessary consequence, the rules and customs which are the expression of God's will, will be kept; discipline and silence will be maintained, and habitual self-restraint will be universal. But once let human nature be allowed to assert itself, especially in regard of material comforts or bodily requirements, and at once the door is opened to laxity of discipline, to exceptions and singularities; self-restraint gives place to self-indulgence, the religious spirit of mortification is supplanted by a worldly spirit of self-ease, and in the same proportion does the spirit of fervour decline and die out.

4. "Common life" preserves and maintains charity. Where common life is adhered to, each Religious is a source of edification to his brethren by his exemplary regularity; he wins their admiration and respect, and consequently also their love. Thus religious charity is promoted, because each one anticipates his brother in acts of kindness and self-sacrifice: whereas we may justly say that religious life becomes a true preparation for our heavenly home. On the contrary, when one is observed to make light of rules and customs, to seek exemptions from any that are laborious or disagreeable to flesh and blood, and thus to throw their burden upon others; when again he is not satisfied with the ordinary provision made for his religious brethren, when he is not content to bear the inconveniences which are attached to

his profession of humility, poverty, mortification, and obedience, he not only becomes a source of disedification, but also a cause of irritation, murmuring, and discontent, and what is far worse, an object for scandal; for by his example he leads others to seek for the same exemptions and indulgences. It is in this manner that the spirit of the world is at present trying to force its way into religious houses, and that the love of self-ease, under the pretext of necessity, is striving to oust the spirit of self-denial, which is synonymous with the practice of the three essential vows of Religion.

5. From a consideration of all these inestimable advantages and blessings attached to common life, and of the miseries attendant on its non-observance, we learn why the founders of Religious Orders have without exception attached such importance to it; why in their General Congregations such stringent regulations have so often been made regarding it; and why Holy Church has set so great store upon it as to prohibit by severe laws any violations of it. Such regulations are abundantly justified by the knowledge of the grave evils that have been introduced into a Religious Order where this common life is not insisted upon. For the letter as well as the spirit of the rules, drawn up after the help of severe penances and much prayer by the founder, and approved and confirmed by the Holy See, as being the application of the Gospel and the expression of God's will to all those who have really been called to observe them, are thus seriously imperilled.

Again, all order and regularity is sacrificed where some are dispensed from one rule, some from another, where a concession is granted to one, but refused to another who probably stands in greater need of it, but whose spirit of self-denial prompts him to decline it. Principles of laxity, self-indulgence, and worldliness imperceptibly diffuse themselves through a community, the example of one making itself felt in many, who are too easily influenced in a downward direction; all this to the great irritation, annoyance, and disgust of

those who see with sorrow the spirit of self-indulgence undermining the truly religious spirit of mortification and self-denial.

Let us examine ourselves seriously on this important subject, and see what our own dispositions are with regard to common life. Do we practically appreciate its blessings and advantages? Do we live in a clear conviction of its necessity? and yet do we seek exemptions on the pretext of health or any other grounds, thus putting our bodily well-being before our spiritual good, and the honest and generous observance of our rules? Is there any reason to fear that by so doing we may have furnished the occasion for others to follow our example, thereby encouraging the less fervent and disedifying those who live up to their profession and honestly adhere to their engagements?

Let us ask ourselves whether this has arisen from want of self-denial or from positive love of self-ease, or any imagined necessity on our part; if so, let us sincerely regret it, and as we value our religious vocation, let us at once resolve to amend. *Nunc dixi, nunc cœpi, hæc mutatio dexteræ Excelsi.*

"Our Father."

9.—ON EXTERNAL MODESTY.

The world expects from Religious great self-control and modesty in their external deportment; it is easily disedified and shocked when it does not find this, and with reason, for those who profess to follow Jesus Christ, who are supposed to know Him intimately, and to form themselves interiorly and exteriorly after His example, should manifest the same by their modesty.[1] This duty is still more incumbent on those who have a distinct care of souls, and whose office it is to mix with people of the world, or who are employed in external works, such as teaching, visiting, &c.

[1] Philipp. iv. 5.

First Point.—The rules of modesty help us in acquiring interior mortification and a spirit of recollection; and supply us with constant occasions of practising exterior self-denial.

The observance of them will greatly increase our authority, our influence, and the reputation in which we are held by externs. On the other hand, by neglecting them we expose ourselves to misinterpretation and suspicion, as also to many dangers and temptations against our second vow, seeing that such negligence opens the door to dissipation, curiosity, irregularity, and aridity in spiritual duties. Moreover, neglect of these rules causes us to look lightly upon our shortcomings and faults, and thereby exposes us to the danger of falling into some grievous sin, according to the warning of Ecclesiasticus, "And he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little."[1] Above all, these rules are the great preservative of holy purity, as we have said, and consequently should be held in high reverence and esteem: for whosoever should presume to say that he entertained no fear with regard to holy chastity, and therefore paid no heed to these rules, is very near his fall, and cannot with impunity give full rein to his senses. This is proved both by reason and by sad experience in those who have thrown off the religious habit and have gone back to the world.

Second Point.—The easy-going Religious, no matter how great may be his accomplishments and learning, his eloquence or zeal, will find his best efforts comparatively useless unless he can win the esteem and respect of those amongst whom he labours: for no one will place confidence in him nor consult him on matters concerning the salvation of his soul. On the other hand, whoever practises the restraint imposed by these rules, will, through the example which he gives of holy modesty, gain the confidence of others, and attract them to him for counsel. He will edify others by his humility in speaking of himself always with great modesty, whilst

[1] Ecclus. xix. 1.

of others he has nothing to say which is not to their credit and in their praise. By his prudence and discretion he will set the example of refraining from all triviality, loud laughter, unseemly joking and boisterous talk; and by his affability, he will raise them above all vulgarity and buffoonery, and charm them into imitating his amiable and courteous manner. By his self-restraint he will teach them the right use of their senses, and how to preserve a general composure in all their words and actions.

Third Point.—Let us, then, diligently scrutinize our behaviour, and see what there is to correct in ourselves.

Do modesty, humility, and a due religious gravity, shine forth in all that we say and in all our actions?

Does our curiosity betray us into the habit of turning our eyes on every side in order to see everything that happens, instead of keeping them modestly cast down except when in conversation with another? Does the presence of interior peace in our souls manifest itself by the corresponding calmness and serenity of our countenance?

Do we observe cleanliness and order in our dress and habits of life? Are we hurried and restless in our movements when there is no cause for it, or, on the other hand, do we often lounge or dawdle about? Do we try to follow in all circumstances and on all occasions the counsel of St. Paul, "Let your modesty be known to all men, for the Lord is nigh,"[1] thus by our very presence inspiring a spirit of recollection and of reverence for God?

End with the "Our Father."

[1] Philipp. iv. 5.

10.—ON REMEDIES AGAINST TEMPTATIONS.

We may lay it down as a law of Divine Providence that each one will have to undergo temptations. God has so ordained it lest we should fall into a state of carelessness and negligence, but may on the contrary give proofs of our fidelity and love towards our Blessed Lord. This is asserted by the Holy Spirit as well in the Old as in the New Testament. Thus we read, "Because thou wast pleasing unto God, it was necessary that temptation should try thee,"[1] and again, "Coming to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation,"[2] and again, "Blessed is the man who suffereth temptation,"[3] &c. Wherefore it is necessary that we should always be ready with arms in our hands to resist and overcome them.

First. Let us recall those words of St. Paul: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."[4] If with one hand He permits trials, He assists us with the other. Therefore let us turn to Him, and gratefully thank Him for making us sharers in His Cross; let us conform ourselves to His most holy and adorable will, and earnestly call upon Him for His help and protection.

Secondly. Let us cherish a tender love for the Most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, and let us foster a filial confidence in her as our most loving Mother also.

Thirdly. Let us when tempted humble ourselves in the sight of God, calling to mind His many Divine benefits and blessings in our regard, and meditating on the "last great truths."[5]

Fourthly. Let us ask ourselves with Joseph, "How can I do this wicked thing and sin against my God?"[6]

[1] Job xii. 13. [2] Ecclus. ii. 1. [3] St. James i. 12.
[4] 1 Cor. x. 13. [5] Ecclus. vii. 40.
[6] Genesis xxxix. 9.

How can I consent to this temptation, and thus offend my Heavenly Father, who has so greatly loved and blessed me? How rebel against my Creator, who has been so generous in His favours to me, or against my Redeemer, who has died such a terrible Death for me, and has purchased my liberty at the price of His own Most Precious Blood?

Fifthly. When we find ourselves harassed with temptations to blasphemy, or pride, or impurity, or scrupulosity, or despondency, let us at once elicit an act of the opposite virtue, as of praise, humility, mortification, or confidence in God. We find many such acts suggested to us in the Psalms of David, and elsewhere throughout the Sacred Scriptures.

Sixthly. Above all let us remember that our best weapons are prayer combined with the mortification of our passions and inordinate inclinations.

Seventhly. Let us not look upon our temptations as chastisements inflicted by God, though sometimes He allows them in punishment for our negligences and tepidity, but let us rather regard them as favours and contrivances of His love, whereby He would compel us to run to Him for help, or would try our virtue and increase our merit. Thus counsels St. James, "My brethren, count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience;"[1] and Tobias, "This trial the Lord permitted that an example might be given to posterity of His patience, as also of holy Job."[2]

Eighthly. It is often an excellent thing to repeat certain passages of the Sacred Scripture which cast ridicule and contempt upon the devil, as, "How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, to the earth, that didst wound the nations,"[3] "Begone, Satan, and adore the Lord thy God," or, "Thanks be to God, who punishes thee for thy perversity," and the like.

Ninthly. In the last place, it is always good and

[1] St. James i. 2. [2] Tobias ii. 12.
[3] Isaias xvi. 12; Apoc. xii. 9.

profitable to make known our difficulties to a prudent director or spiritual Father, and acquaint him with our temptations, that we may be aided by his advice and encouragement.

II.—ON THE ORDINARY SOURCES OF OUR FAULTS AND IMPERFECTIONS.

It may be well to review from time to time the general sources whence come those ordinary faults, negligences, and imperfections which are more frequently to be met with in religious persons and such as live in communities.

1. The first source is negligence in spiritual exercises, and more especially in meditation. This is due mainly to the non-observance of the Additions which St.Ignatius lays down as the preliminaries of mental prayer, fidelity to which is the price we pay if we would secure the special assistance of God. This negligence may be traced also to a general dissipation of mind and forgetfulness of the presence of God when discharging the duties of our office. The two examinations of conscience, the general and particular, are often rendered of little or no profit for a similar reason. We fail in employing the *industriæ* prescribed in the Spiritual Exercises, and go through them in a spirit of routine, without heart or energy. The like apathy and want of earnestness often spoils the fruit of our other spiritual duties.

2. Another not unfrequent origin of our faults is an undue estimate of our imagined excellence and ability. This self-esteem often insinuates itself into the soul on the occasion of any success in our studies or in preaching, or in the discharge of the duties imposed by obedience; and strangely enough it is generally found in those who have least right to lay claim to it. Ordinarily it is accompanied by extreme sensitiveness, and a secret craving for the good opinion of others.

3. A third source of many faults is irritability, fretful-

ness under inconveniences, obstinacy in maintaining our own views, and intolerance of those of others who differ from us. Wherever this tendency is not effectually repressed, it becomes also an occasion of many faults in others with whom we have to live.

4. Another source of frequent sins against charity is an inordinate affection for certain persons and aversion to others; feelings which generally go together, with the too common result of spoiling the harmony and union of a religious community, and creating division amongst them.

5. A fifth origin of many faults is selfishness, which causes us to look to our own bodily comforts, and to seek self and our own interest, without any consideration for the convenience of others. This may often arise from an impression that we are weak and in delicate health, or from an idea of our age and past labours requiring particular consideration.

6. A sixth danger to those living in Religion is the absence of simplicity and ingenuousness in their general conduct and conversation, deeming it good policy to practise a little diplomacy and dissimulation, lest they be thwarted in some scheme of ambition. In some Religious Orders this tendency is rightly visited with the severest punishments as likely to undermine the stability and existence of the Order.

7. The seventh source of faults is neglect of religious discipline. If punctuality and silence flourish in a religious house, then we may reasonably conclude that a spirit of fervour flourishes also; but where these are absent there is too much reason to fear that tepidity prevails, and that faults are multiplied.

8. The eighth source of many shortcomings is idleness and waste of time. This is the origin of much mischief, both external and internal, and it is hard to reconcile innocence of life with idleness in one who has given himself to God by entering into Religion, where he is especially exposed to temptation from the devil and his own corrupt nature.

9. The ninth source of evil is reserve and aversion in regard of Superiors; hence frequent murmurings and complaints, misrepresentation of their conduct, condemnation of their arrangements, mistrust in them, and disobedience.

To one or other of these sources are to be attributed nearly all the sins, offences, and negligences which stand in the way of our perfection and imperil the fervour of Religious. Wherefore it is of the utmost importance that we should detect their earliest manifestations, and repress them at once, instead of delaying until it is too late. *Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur* is a safe and necessary principle if we mean to be serious in our profession and bent upon acquiring perfection in its practice.

APPENDIX IV.

ORDER OF EXERCISES FOR A RETREAT OF EIGHT DAYS.[1]

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On the End of Creatures.
3rd Meditation.—On Indifference.
Consideration. —On Dissipation.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 20; iii. 9.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.
2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.
3rd Meditation.—On the Sin of the Christian.
Consideration. —On the necessity of Prayer.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 22; ii. 5.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Hell.
2nd Meditation.—On Death.
3rd Meditation.—On the Prodigal Son.
Consideration. —On Trials.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 23, 24.

[1] It is supposed that each day, a repetition of one or more of the meditations of the day will be made, for the space of an hour, by the person making the Exercises.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—The Incarnation.
3rd Meditation.—The Nativity.
Consideration. —On Humility.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 7, 2; iii. 3, 13.

FIFTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Flight into Egypt.
2nd Meditation.—The Hidden Life.
3rd Meditation.—The Baptism of our Lord.
Consideration. —On Mortification.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 33—38.

SIXTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Two Standards.
2nd Meditation.—On Three Classes.
3rd Meditation.—On Three Degrees of Humility.
Consideration. —Rules of Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii, 23, 27, 52.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Last Supper.
2nd Meditation.—The Agony in the Garden.
3rd Meditation.—The Scourging at the Pillar.
Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 11, 12.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Crucifixion.
2nd Meditation.—The Death of Jesus.
3rd Meditation.—The Resurrection.
Consideration. —The Contemplation on Divine Love.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 6—48.

A SECOND ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On the End of Creatures.
3rd Meditation.—On the End of the Christian.
Consideration. —On Prayer and Spiritual Duties.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 21.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.
2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.
3rd Meditation.—On Hell.
Consideration. —On Sanctity of Ordinary Actions.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 5; iv. 7.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Death.
2nd Meditation.—On Particular Judgment.
3rd Meditation.—On General Judgment.
Consideration. —On Mortification.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 14.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Conversion of St. Peter.
2nd Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
3rd Meditation.—On Two Standards.
Consideration. —On Charity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 32—56.

FIFTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Classes.
2nd Meditation.—The Baptism of Christ.

3rd Meditation.—Our Lord tempted.
Consideration. —On Temptations.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 13; iii. 18.

SIXTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Sermon on the Mount.
2nd Meditation.—The Storm at Sea.
3rd Meditation.—The Miracle of the Loaves.
Consideration. —On the Value and Use of Time.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 41, 39.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Last Supper.
2nd Meditation.—The Scourging at the Pillar.
3rd Meditation.—The Crowning with Thorns.
Consideration. —On the Blessed Sacrament.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 11, 12; iv. 1—3.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Resurrection.
2nd Meditation.—The Ascension.
3rd Meditation.—Contemplation on Divine Love.
Consideration. —The Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iv. 16, 17.

A THIRD ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On the End of the Christian.
3rd Meditation.—On the Use of Creatures.
Consideration. —On the Duties of our State.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 1, 6, 7.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Indifference.
2nd Meditation.—On Venial Sin.
3rd Meditation.—On our many Venial Sins.
Consideration. —On the necessity of Prayer.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 9, 10, 15.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Purgatory.
2nd Meditation.—On Particular Judgment.
3rd Meditation.—On the Conversion of St. Peter or of St. Mary Magdalene.
Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 40, 41, 47.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—The Annunciation.
3rd Meditation.—The Visitation of our Lady.
Consideration. —On Humility.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 23—25.

FIFTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Nativity.
2nd Meditation.—The Presentation.
3rd Meditation.—The Adoration of the Magi.
Consideration. —On Purity of Intention.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 36, 37.

SIXTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Flight into Egypt.
2nd Meditation.—The Hidden Life at Nazareth.
3rd Meditation.—The Baptism in the Jordan.
Consideration. —The Rules of Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 34, 35.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Two Standards.
2nd Meditation.—On Three Classes.
3rd Meditation.—The Institution of the Eucharist.
Consideration. —On the Mass.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iv. 2—4.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Internal Sorrows of Jesus.
2nd Meditation.—His Exterior Sufferings.
3rd Meditation.—The Death of Jesus.
Consideration. —On the Blessings of Suffering.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 12.

A FOURTH ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On the End of Creatures.
3rd Meditation.—On Indifference.
Consideration. —On Necessity, motives, advantages of Indifference.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 31.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.
2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.
3rd Meditation.—On Effects of Sin on the Soul.
Consideration. —On Neglect of the Duties of our State.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 20, 11.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Hell.
2nd Meditation.—On Death.
3rd Meditation.—On General Judgment.
Consideration. —On Eternity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 49; iii. 48.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—The Incarnation.
3rd Meditation.—The Nativity.
Consideration. —On Spiritual Poverty and Detachment.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 10, 11.

FIFTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Adoration of the Magi.
2nd Meditation.—The Hidden Life.
3rd Meditation.—On Two Standards.
Consideration. —On Obedience to Superiors.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 4, 13, 18.

SIXTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—Temptations in the Desert.
2nd Meditation.—The Miracles of Jesus.
3rd Meditation.—The Sermon on the Mount.
Consideration. —Jesus our Model in the Use of our Tongue.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 46—59.

SEVENTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Agony in the Garden.
2nd Meditation.—The Treason of Judas and Flight of the Apostles.

3rd Meditation.—Condemnation of Jesus.
Consideration. —On Humiliations.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 56.

EIGHTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Death upon the Cross.
2nd Meditation.—The Resurrection.
3rd Meditation.—The Contemplation on Divine Love.
Consideration. —Review the Considerations of the Retreat.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 47.

ORDER OF EXERCISES FOR A RETREAT OF FOUR DAYS.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On the End of the Christian.
3rd Meditation.—On the End of Creatures.
4th Meditation.—On Mortal Sin.
Consideration. —On the Duties of our State of Life.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 21, 22.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Sins.
2nd Meditation.—On our own Sins.
3rd Meditation.—On the Heinousness of Sin in a Christian.
4th Meditation.—On the Pains of Hell.
Consideration. —On the Life of Faith.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 24.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—On Two Standards.
3rd Meditation.—On Three Classes.
4th Meditation.—The Public Life of Christ.
Consideration. —The Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 48, 49.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Interior Sufferings of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—The Exterior Sufferings of Christ.
3rd Meditation.—The Crucifixion.
4th Meditation.—The Resurrection.
Consideration. —On Perseverance.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iv. 16, 17.

SECOND ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On Sin.
3rd Meditation.—On our own Sins.
4th Meditation.—On Hell.
Consideration. —On the Institution and Practice of Penance.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 30, 31.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Death.
2nd Meditation.—On General Judgment.

3rd Meditation.—The Return of the Prodigal.
4th Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
Consideration. —The Mass and Communion.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 2, 11, 13.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Two Standards.
2nd Meditation.—On Three Classes.
3rd Meditation.—The Sermon on the Mount.
4th Meditation.—The Last Supper.
Consideration. —The Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 15, 25; ii. 6.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Crucifixion.
2nd Meditation.—The Death of Jesus.
3rd Meditation.—The Burial of Jesus.
4th Meditation.—The Resurrection.
Consideration. —On Reformation of Life.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. ii. 7, 8.

THIRD ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On Sin.
3rd Meditation.—On Death.
4th Meditation.—On Hell.
Consideration. —On the Duties of our State.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. i. 25; ii. 5.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—The Incarnation.
3rd Meditation.—The Nativity.
4th Meditation.—The Flight into Egypt.
Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 18, 19.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Two Standards.
2nd Meditation.—On Three Classes.
3rd Meditation.—On Three Degrees of Humility.
4th Meditation.—On the Eight Beatitudes.
Consideration. —On the Value and Use of Time.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 8—10.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Scourging at the Pillar.
2nd Meditation.—The Crowning with Thorns.
3rd Meditation.—The Death upon the Cross.
4th Meditation.—The Ascension.
Consideration. —The Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 12; iv. 16.

FOURTH ORDER.

FIRST DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the End of Man.
2nd Meditation.—On the Three Sins.
3rd Meditation.—On Venial Sin.
4th Meditation.—On Purgatory.
Consideration. —On the Value and Use of Time.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 57.

SECOND DAY.

1st Meditation.—On the Kingdom of Christ.
2nd Meditation.—The Nativity.
3rd Meditation.—The Hidden Life.
4th Meditation.—On Two Standards.
Consideration. —The Election.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 57, 59.

THIRD DAY.

1st Meditation.—On Three Classes.
2nd Meditation.—The Baptism in the Jordan.
3rd Meditation.—The Institution of the Eucharist.
4th Meditation.—The Agony in the Garden.
Consideration. —On Fraternal Charity.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 47, 49.

FOURTH DAY.

1st Meditation.—The Carrying of the Cross.
2nd Meditation.—The Death upon the Cross.
3rd Meditation.—The Ascension.
4th Meditation.—The Contemplation on Divine Love.
Consideration. —On Resignation to the Divine Will.
Spiritual reading.—*Imitation*, bk. iii. 24.